

THE PRESBYTERIAN
PULPIT
OUR NEW EDENS



BY
J. R. MILLER



Class BX 9178

Book . M 5 Q 8

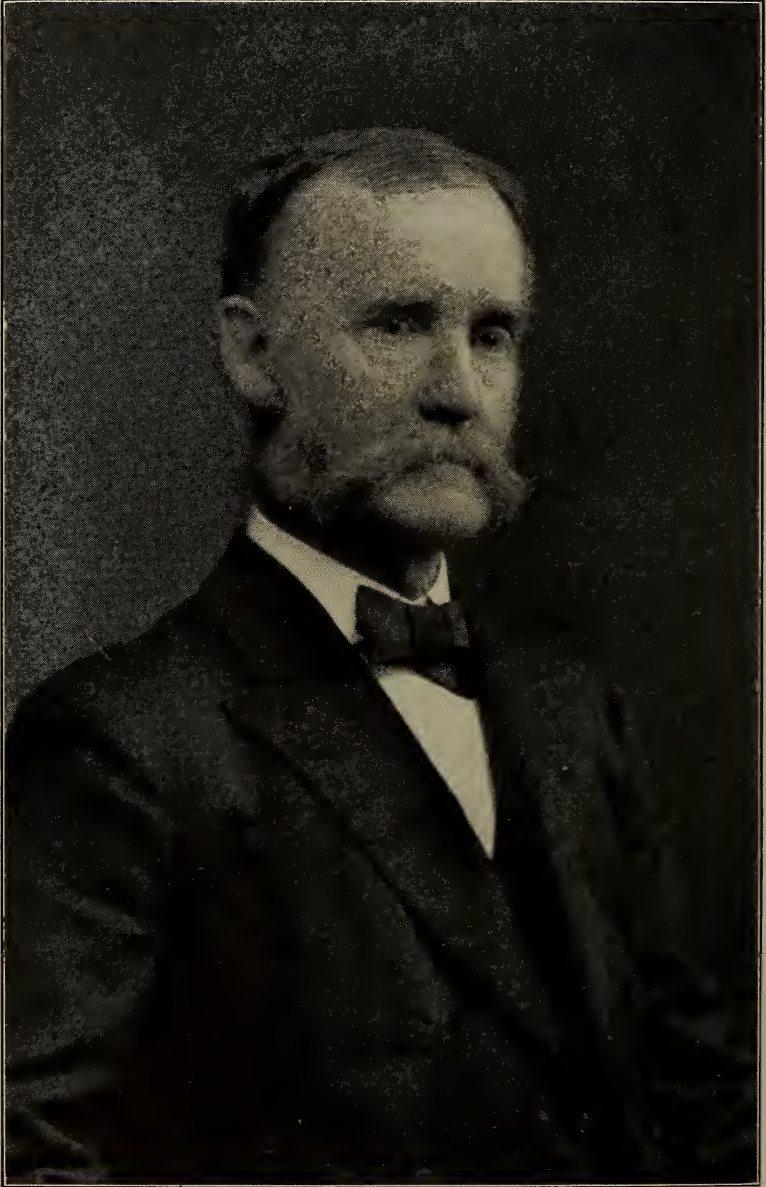
Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.





OUR NEW EDENS



Faithfully yours

J. R. Miller.

The Presbyterian Pulpit



OUR NEW EDENS

BY

J. R. MILLER

Author of "Week-Day Religion," "Wedded Life,"
"Silent Times," etc., etc.

“Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people
all the words of this Life.”

PHILADELPHIA
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
AND SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK

1903

BX9178
M508

THE LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS,
TWO COPIES RECEIVED
OCT 19 1903
COPYRIGHT ENTRY
OCT 14 1903
CLASS a XXa. No.
70444
COPY B.

Copyright, 1903, by
J. R. MILLER.

Published October, 1903.

WASH DC
20540

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. OUR NEW EDENS	3
II. THE WAY TO GOD	23
III. PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE	43
IV. A PARABLE OF GROWTH	63
V. THE BEAUTY OF QUIETNESS	83
VI. THE NAME ON THE FOREHEAD	103
VII. THE TRUE GLORY OF LIFE	123
VIII. GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT	141

The Scripture quotations in this volume are from the American Revision.

I

OUR NEW EDENS

“ And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”—GENESIS ii. 15.

“ We cannot go so far
That home is out of sight—
The morn, the evening star,
Will say, ‘ Good day ! Good night ! ’ ”

—*Henry Burton.*

OUR NEW EDENS

I

OUR NEW EDENS

THE first home there ever was in this world was in the garden of Eden. God the Father made it ready for His first children—made it ready for them before they were created. I can imagine with what loving thought He prepared this home for them. He made it very beautiful. He gathered into it all the loveliest things of all the earth—trees, plants, flowers, and fruits. Streams of water rippled through it and there were birds and animals of all kinds in it.

The first home was a garden. Every home should be a garden spot. An important part of our work in this world is garden-making. We ought to make our homes as beautiful as we can. They may be very plain, perhaps only two or three rooms, but we should put into them all the lovely things we can gather. The first home in this world was in Eden. We should try to make

our homes Edens. One writes of a quiet man who had given his life to a service of love :—

In the desert, where he lies entombed,
He made a little garden, and left there
Some flowers that but for him had never bloomed.

Every home should be such a garden. Whether it is a luxurious place or bare of earthly comforts, it should be sweet with the fragrance of love and beautiful with the beauty of the Lord.

The home has always been dear to the Divine heart. When Jesus sent His disciples out to preach, one of His instructions was, "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house." On Christ's lips this is more than a salutation: it is a divine benediction as well. Peace means love, heaven's love, the absence of all strife and bitterness. It means also the absence of care and worry. The New Testament tells us of the home at Bethany where Jesus Himself was welcomed by the sisters. He left peace there. He taught the lesson of quietness and confidence. One of the sisters was disposed to worry—it is not easy to be a housekeeper, to have to provide for the wants of a family, and to manage all the domestic affairs of a home and not sometimes fret a little. Martha was anxious and

troubled about many things. But Jesus gently taught her the lesson of peace, and we may be quite sure she never forgot it. We never find her worrying any more.

Jesus comes to the door of each home of ours and says, "Peace be to this house." We should let the messenger of peace come in. Nothing good ever comes of fretting. We cannot get clear of cares. There are troubles enough in any of our lives to spoil our happiness if we yield to them. But no matter what comes, what burdens press, what things go wrong, what flowers fade, listen to the Master's word at the door, "Peace be to this house."

"He who waters meadow lilies
With the dew from out the sky;
He who feeds the fitting sparrows
When in need of food they cry,
Never fails to help His children
In all things, both great and small;
For His ear is ever open
To our faintest far-off call."

How can we make new Edens of our homes? What are some of the secrets of home happiness? I might gather them all into one word and say—Christ. If we have Christ as our guest, our home will be happy—Christ in the joy and Christ in the sorrow; Christ in the day of plenty and Christ in

the day of pinching want ; Christ in the business and Christ in the social life ; Christ at the marriage altar and Christ as the wedded pair walk together toward the sunset gate. Christ makes a happy home when He is admitted into all the household life.

The other day a young friend who is to be a bride in a little while came to have a quiet talk about her new life. She has never confessed Christ as her Master and Friend, and she said she wanted to do it soon, adding : " We never know what trouble we may have and when we may need Christ. I want to take Him now into my new life and into my home." She is doing right, but her thought of the possible need for Christ reveals a mistaken conception of His mission to us. Christ is not needed merely in the days of trouble. Religion is not meant to be a lamp for the sick room or for the days when the shutters are bowed and there is crape on the door. It is for the sunny days as well. Christ's first public act after His baptism was His attendance at a wedding-feast. He would come into all our experiences of gladness as well as into our times of care or trial. Our joy needs heaven in it quite as much as our sorrow does.

It is more of Christ we need in our homes to

make their happiness perfect. One of Turner's pictures was being exhibited in the artist's studio. It was rich and beautiful. But those who were present that day saw that it lacked something. It seemed all mist and cloud—hazy, vague, ill-defined, incomprehensible. The friends who looked at the canvas were perplexed—they could not understand the picture. The artist himself saw the lack, and, taking his brush, added a touch of red to his painting. That took away all the mystery, the vagueness, the mistiness, and made it intelligible.

Some of our homes seem to have in them everything they need to make them perfect. They are filled with beauty. They have all the equipments and conveniences of modern taste and skill. Music and art and refinement and the best things that money can add are present. Health and happiness and the gladness of social life yield their portion to the comfort of these homes. But something is yet wanting to make the picture complete. It is Christ's "Peace be to this house." It is a touch of the red of Christ's cross—His love shed abroad in the home-life. If Christ were admitted as a guest, His coming would add immeasurably to the joy and sweetness of the home-life.

But there is only one way of taking Christ into our homes and getting His blessing on our home-life. In olden days there would be a little chapel in great castles where God was formally honored on Sundays, while He was shut out of all the life of other days. Not thus can we take Christ into our homes. He will not come to be a secluded guest, merely to lodge in loneliness in our best room. He must be welcomed into all our life. He must be in each heart. He must sit at our tables and mingle with us in all our intercourse. Christ can bless our home only through the lives of those who make the home circle.

The husband has a part in making the earthly home a little garden of Eden. He must be a good man. He need not be rich, nor brilliant, nor famous, nor clever, but he must be good. He must always be a lover—even to his old age. Then he must be a man—manly, brave, true, generous, worthy of honor. He must be a man of unblemished life. He must be a man who loves his home and lives for it. The husband has an important part in the home garden-making. Some husbands seem not to know this; at least they fail to take their share of the burden.

The wife too has a responsibility. The word "wife" is suggestive. Some lexicographers

would connect it with "weave." In olden days the wife's hands wove the garments her husband wore. This is not the case now, but the wife does weave the garments of her husband's prosperity. Most men who amount to anything worth while confess that they owe it all to their wives. Jeremy Taylor's tribute to a true wife is very beautiful, but as true as beautiful, though it sets a high ideal: "A good wife is heaven's best gift to man, his angel and minister of graces innumerable, his gem of many virtues, his casket of jewels."

The wife is the real home-maker. It is her sweet life that gives the home its atmosphere. Her hands fashion its beauty. Her heart makes its love. And the end is so worthy, so noble, so divine, that no woman called to be a wife should consider any price too great to pay that she may be the light, the joy, the blessing, the inspiration, of her home. I know how some good mothers sometimes feel—that it is only a dull, dreary, routine life they are living. They contrast it with the lives of certain women who are achieving distinction in other lines, winning honors, doing work which the world praises, and sometimes they feel that their lives are humdrum and insignificant in comparison. But the woman who makes a sweet, beautiful home, filling it with love,

prayer, and song, is doing something better than anything else her hands could find to do anywhere beneath the blue skies.

“ ‘ My day has all gone ’—’twas a woman who spoke,
 As she turned her face to the sunset glow—
 ‘ And I have been busy the whole day long ;
 Yet for my work there is nothing to show.’

“ No painting nor sculpture her hand had wrought ;
 No laurel of fame her labor had won.
 What was she doing in all the long day,
 With nothing to show at set of sun ? ”

You know what she was doing—kindly things all the day long, trifles, perhaps, but trifles that left blessings everywhere. She had put benedictions into her husband’s heart as he went forth in the morning to his work. She had brought heaven down about her children’s lives as she prayed with them. She had left touches of beauty in every part of her home as she went about her task-work. She had kept sweet amid all the home care and turmoil. She had found time to go out to carry to a sick neighbor or to a home of sorrow, comfort and cheer.

“ Humbly and quietly all the long day
 Had her sweet service for others been done ;
 Yet for the labors of heart and of hand
 What could she show at set of sun ?

“ Ah, she forgot that our Father in heaven
Ever is watching the work that we do,
And records He keeps of all we forget,
Then judges our work with judgment that's true ;

“ For an angel writes down in a volume of gold
The beautiful deeds that all do below.
Though nothing she had at set of the sun,
The angel above had something to show.”

Children, when they come, are also important factors in making the happiness of the home. They bring care, and demand toil and sacrifice, and cost oftentimes pain and grief; yet the blessing they bring to a true home repays a thousand times the care and cost.

One of the holiest secrets of home happiness is a true mother. God sends many beautiful things to this world, many noble gifts; but no blessing He ever gives is richer than that which He bestows in a mother who has learned love's lesson well and understands something of the meaning of her sacred calling. One writes:—

“ God thought to give the sweetest thing
In His almighty power
To earth ; and deeply pondering
What it should be, one hour
In fondest joy and love of heart
Outweighing every other,
He moved the gates of heaven apart
And gave to earth a mother.”

A father also has his share in the making of the Eden home. It is not fair to put all the responsibility for the home-life on the mother. Fathers cannot evade their duty in this regard without lack of faithfulness and also of chivalrous conduct. God will call them to answer for their part of the responsibility. Then it is not manly for a man to try to roll the whole burden on her whom he sometimes twits with being the "weaker vessel." If the wife is weak and he is so strong, then—*noblesse oblige*. Let him bear the strong man's part of the load. No doubt there are parts of the home duty which a mother can do far better than a father. Men's hands are awkward and clumsy, and a woman's hands are gentle and deft in love's arts. But let no man cherish the notion that he has nothing to do in this home garden-making. His strong life should be the secure shelter beneath which his wife and children may safely abide. His character and disposition should be a continual revealing of the love and holiness of God.

Brothers and sisters also have their part in making the home happiness. Sometimes they forget this. Some young people do not add to the joy and the sweetness of the home in which they have been brought up as they might do.

They do not give to their parents the comfort and cheer they might give. They do not remember and practice the fifth commandment. Then they do not live together sweetly as they might do, adding to the music of the home. Children carry in their hands the happiness of their parents. We talk of the responsibility of parenthood—did you ever think of the responsibility of children for their parents? In this home garden-making every child has a share.

The artist was painting a picture of a dead mother, and was using a photograph as his copy. But to make the face look fresher and younger, he was leaving out the lines and marks of age and care on the face. "No, no," said the son. "Don't take out the lines. Leave them, every one. It wouldn't be my mother if all the lines were gone." Then he told the story of her devotion to her children through their infancy and through times of sickness. The lines which seemed to disfigure the face were love's records, telling of sacrifice and suffering. We should never forget what we owe to our mothers.

Then may I say a special word about children's thought for their fathers? Mothers are idealized much oftener and with more just recognition and praise than fathers. More children pay honor

and love and attention to mothers than to fathers. Of course, mothers do more for children than fathers do—suffer more, are gentler and sweeter, give more thought and time and strength to them, and deserve more in return. We are not in danger of ever overdoing our gratitude to our mothers or of showing them too much kindness. But fathers also hunger for love from their children. Max O'Rell has a strong word somewhere about the beauty of a daughter's attention and devotion to her father, saying also that such love and appreciation are rare. Love your mother and give her high honor, but do not forget that you can give your father great joy by being kind to him. He loves you too and has lived for you all the years. He needs your affection and will be cheered by your thoughtfulness and attention.

I want to say some earnest words about the home-life we must live if we are to make our homes little gardens of Eden. As in everything, love is the great master secret of home happiness. When love is left out, the peace is broken. We must remember too that love needs expression. There are men who love their wives and would die for them, but who are not always gentle and kind to them. There are wives who love their husbands, but say little about it and do not take

pains to show it. There is need for love that is affectionate, thoughtful, fond in its expression. Bring your flowers while they will do good and do not keep them for the day of the funeral.

“You placed this flower in her hand, you say,
 This pure, pale rose in her hand of clay?
 Methinks, could she lift her sealèd eyes,
 They would meet your own with grieved surprise.

* * * * * *
 When did you give her a flower before?

Ah, well, what matter, when life is o'er?

* * * * * *

But I pray you think
 That love will starve if it is not fed—
 That true hearts pray for their daily bread.”

Parents cannot think too seriously of what they should try to make their homes for the sake of their children. They are given to us in tender infancy to be brought up by us for worthy, beautiful lives. It is our duty to teach them and train them so that they shall be ready by and by for the positions in life they may be called to fill. The place of the home-life among the educational influences which help to mold and shape character is supreme in its importance. It is not enough to have a good house to live in. It is not enough to have fine carpets, and handsome furniture and pictures, and bric-a-brac, and musical

instruments, and to live off the best products of the fields and of the gardens. Most of the world's worthiest men and women, those who have blessed the world the most, were brought up in plain homes, without luxury. It is the tone of the home-life that is important. We should make it pure, elevating, refining, inspiring. The books we bring in, the papers and magazines, the guests we have at our tables and admit to our firesides, the home conversation, the pictures we hang on our walls—all these are educative.

Then the religious influences are vitally important. In that first garden home the Lord came and went as a familiar friend. Christ must be our guest if our home is to be a fit place either for our children or for ourselves. If no window opens into heaven, it is not a true home. If there is no prayer in it, it is not a home at all—it is only a heathen or atheistic lodging-place.

A good man tells of going back to the home of his childhood and of being put to sleep in the spare room. Opening a closet, he saw an old stool there, faded and worn, and noticed especially two deep dents in the cushion. Evidently they were dents made by a pair of knees. He understood at a glance. It was on that stool his mother had knelt daily through years as she

prayed for her children, and prayed them one by one into the kingdom. There should be such a stool or spot in every home, where mothers and fathers bow morning and night to plead for their children.

They say that family worship is falling into disuse—going out of fashion. It is a great loss to the world if this is true. There is a story of one man whom his wife urged to begin family prayers. It was hard the first time. A Bible chapter had been read and the two were on their knees, but there was silence—the prayer did not begin. The wife at length cried out, “O God, give John a lift.” The lift was given and the sealed lips were opened. It may not be easy to start family prayers, but if we try, God will give us a lift, and then great joy and good will follow.

There are godly mothers who every day kneel by their children’s sides and pray with them, and there is great power in a mother’s prayer. One writes:—

“When mother prayed, then all the air
Grew tremulous with music rare ;
Love’s earnest pleading for its own
Was wafted heavenward to the throne.
‘God bless my children’—thus the prayer :

“ ‘Keep them unspotted everywhere
O Father God!’ In softest tone
Echoed the whisper upward blown
When mother prayed.

“ O dread the day when mother’s prayer
Breathes out no more her heart’s fond care;
For blessings rich from heavenly zone
Came angel-like from heights far flown,
When mother prayed.”

We talk about the dangers of the street for our children, and God alone knows how real and how great the dangers are. What is the best way to save them from these perils? We must do it in the home. There is a tendency to roll the responsibility for the religious care and protection of children over on the church. But we cannot evade our personal duty in this way. Parents are the first custodians of their children’s lives. If they would meet their responsibility and be able to look God and their children in the face at the judgment, they must make their homes as nearly gardens of Eden as possible. The way to save the boys from the temptations of the streets is to make home so bright, so sweet, so beautiful, so happy, so full of love, joy, and prayer, that the streets will have no attractiveness for them, no power to win them away. “Overcome evil with good.”

“Come, let us live with our children,” is the call of the new education. The parents who are ready to do this will not be sorry for it by and by. No other work we can do will yield larger returns. But there are some who do not care to devote themselves in this way to the teaching and training of their children. “It is too much trouble,” they say. It is pathetic to think of how many children there are who are always in the way, whose noise always jars home nerves, who never get much love at home.

Let us live with our children. Let us take them into our lives. Let us enter into their lives. The best thing a father can do for his boy is to be a boy again himself with him. The best thing a mother can do for her daughter is to be a girl again herself with her. There is no revival needed to-day quite so imperatively as a revival of sweet, beautiful homes that shall clutch the lives of the boys and girls in them with a clutch of love from which no power of temptation or of evil can ever tear them away.

I call upon all parents who care to heed my pleading to begin to-day to make their homes more winning, more attractive, more happy, sweeter, heavenlier. Religion? Yes, but not religion made somber or distasteful, so that your

children will not be influenced by it. Make your religion sunny, cheerful, full of sympathy with child-life, glad, songful—a religion for boys and girls. There is no reason why religion in a home should not be winsome, just as the life of Christ was. Bring heaven down into your homes. Try to make such a home-life as must have been in Joseph's home at Nazareth when Jesus was a boy there. God has planted a new garden of Eden for you to dress and keep. Tend it well.

There is an Eastern legend of a rose so sweet that "even the earth which lies round its roots becomes permeated with fragrance, and little bits of it are sold as amulets and worn by princes." Make your home so sweet, so heavenly, with love and prayer and song and holy living, that all about it there shall be the fragrance of the heart of Christ.

Thus let us make our homes little Eden gardens, in which something of the beauty, the sweetness, and the joy of heaven shall be reproduced on earth, to make the world believe in the home above in the Father's house, waiting for all the Master's friends.

II

THE WAY TO GOD

“I am the way.”—JOHN xiv. 6.

“O patient Love, that weariest not of me—
Alone of all, Thou weariest not of me—
Oh, bear with me till I am lost in Thee ;
Oh, bear with me till I am found in Thee.

“Speak to me out of the silences, Lord,
That my spirit may know,
As forward I go,
That Thy pierced hands are lifting me over the ford.”

—*Lauchlan Maclean Watt.*

II

THE WAY TO GOD

JESUS says He is the way to God. It is the figure of a road that is in His mind. He had spoken of going away to prepare a place for His disciples, adding that He would come again to receive them to Himself, that where He is they may be also. He then said further, "Whither I go, ye know the way." Thomas, whose faith was always slow, said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way." The meaning of His reply was that it is not necessary to know everything or even anything about the details of the way. If we know Christ, if we are His, if we are following Him, that is enough; we will then find the way. To be with Him is to be in the way, for He Himself is the way.

It is very important that we should know the way to heaven. No one knows where heaven is. There have been guesses and speculations. A certain star is heaven, some have said to us. This

great universe, with its millions of worlds and systems of worlds, astronomers tell us, is revolving round one center, one star in a certain constellation. That central star, they suggest, may be the place of the great white throne, the Father's house to which Jesus said He was going, whither He told His disciples they also should come when their work on earth was finished.

But no one knows surely where heaven is, and no one knows the way there. You can find guides to show you the way through the catacombs, or among the Alps, or amid the buildings and ruins of ancient Rome, or across some deep, impenetrable forest. But when you come to die, and your spirit leaves your body, who will show you the way home to the Father's house? And you never can get there alone without guidance. There are no maps or charts of the way.

The question of Thomas seems proper enough: "How can we know the way?" The answer of Jesus is full of comfort: "I am the way." We need not trouble ourselves with geographical or astronomical questions, nor try to find a chart of the road to heaven. If we are Christ's, no matter where we die, we shall find ourselves in the hands of our Saviour, and with Him will be in heaven.

There is another need still more important than finding the way to heaven. We need to find the way to God. We never can get to heaven unless we have first got to God. Here, too, Jesus is the way. He said, "I am the way," and then He added, "No one cometh unto the Father, but by Me." To get to God is life's first and greatest need. Sin is absence from God. In a certain sense we never can get away from God.

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?"

Wherever we turn God is. But in a moral and spiritual sense, only those who have repented and returned to God are near Him. In our sinful state we are in the "far country." We must get to God or we shall perish. The cry of the world in all ages has been, "Show us the Father." This is the interpretation of all heathen worship. Men everywhere have been groping in the darkness, trying to find God. Now Jesus says, "I am the way to the Father."

He does not say, "I will show you the way." He does that too. He came to guide us in the way. He passed over this world, from the cradle to the gates of glory, and left His footprints wherever He went. In the early days of our

country, when a pioneer went through a primeval forest, his the first feet to find their way, he would blaze his path with his ax on the trees, and then others coming after him could easily find the way. Jesus, in going through life, marked His way, and all who come after Him may see where He walked and follow Him. He never went on any wrong path. He never was misled. He marked out for us the way to God.

But that is not what He says here. He says: "I am the way. I Myself am the way." The figure is very suggestive. Often the words of Christ invite us to Him as if we had to go a distance, longer or shorter, to get to Him. He says, "Come unto Me." We see Him yonder, and He is wondrously gracious. But we must go on over the road that intervenes to reach Him. When we get there, we know He will receive us, welcome us, and bless us. But suppose we never get to Him? Suppose we faint and fall by the way? Yet now we learn that Christ is more than goal, that He does not fix a point at which He will meet us, that there is no long or even short space to cross over to get to His feet. He is the way as well as the goal. We have not even one step to take before we come to Him.

“Thou art the way.
Hadst Thou been nothing but the goal,
I cannot say
If thou hadst ever met my soul.

“I cannot see—
I, child of process—if there lies
An end for me,
Full of repose, full of replies.

“I’ll not reproach
The way that goes, my feet that stir.
Access, approach
Art Thou, time, way, and wayfarer.”

A beautiful story is told of Agassiz. When he was a boy his family lived on the edge of a lake in Switzerland. One day the father was on the other side of the lake, and Louis and a younger brother set out on the ice to join him. The mother watched the boys from her window. They got along well till they came to a wide crack in the ice. The taller boy leaped over easily, but the other hesitated. “The little fellow will fall in,” the mother said, “and drown.” But as she watched a moment she saw Louis, the older boy, get down on the ice, laying himself across the crack, his hands on one side and his feet on the other, making a bridge of his body. Then she saw the little fellow climb over him in

safety to the other side, and both the boys run on to find their father. This illustrates what Jesus Christ did for us. There was a great chasm which sin had made between us and God. We could not cross that chasm ourselves. Our goodness never could reach to the Divine requirements. The holiest of us could never get to heaven by any obedience of our own. Then Jesus came and laid Himself down in love across the chasm, making of His own blessed life a bridge on which whosoever will may pass over into the presence and the joy of the Father. "I am the way."

There are two other words here which help us to understand the meaning of this figure. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

"I am the truth." He does not say that He speaks the truth, reveals it. He did this. He was the most wonderful teacher the world ever heard. No man ever spoke as He did. His words are like stars shining in the world's darkness. We cannot begin to understand what the world owes to the teachings of Jesus. The great truths which mean so much, the truths about God's love, mercy, and goodness, seem so familiar to us that they are almost commonplace. Yet it was Jesus who first made known to the world these truths. Two thousand years ago nobody

knew them. The earth lay in moral darkness then. Jesus was a great teacher of truth.

But He does not say He is a revealer of the truth. "I *am* the truth" is the tremendous assertion. The truth was not merely spoken by His lips; it was embodied in His person and in His life. He is the truth. This is more, too, than if He had said, "I am true." He was true—there was nothing false in Him, nothing insincere. He never professed to be what He was not. He never put forth claims which He did not fulfill. He never made promises which He did not keep. Not one word He ever spoke has failed or will fail. Many good people are not so good as they profess to be, but Jesus was absolutely true. We may build our hopes for eternity on any one of His sayings.

But there is more than this in what He says here. He is a revealer of the truth. He is true. But He says, "I am the truth." God Himself is the great central fountain of all truth. All truth flows from Him. Christ was the incarnation of God—God manifest, made known, in the flesh. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," he said. All that God is was revealed, was made known, in Jesus Christ. "I am the truth."

He said further, "I am the life." Again notice

that He does not say: "I will show you the life. I will tell you how to find life." You and I, if living truly, may show others how to find life. We can lead them to the fountain of life. That is what every sincere preacher of the gospel is doing continually. That is what every faithful teacher is doing. That is what every saintly disciple does. But no preacher, no teacher, no holiest saint, can say to any other, "I am the life." We have no life to give to others. We cannot spare any of the oil out of our vessel to give for any other one's lamp. We cannot impart any portion of our little measure of grace to any dearest friend who needs. Only Christ can say, "I am the life." He does not merely tell us that there is life—He says, "Come unto Me and ye shall have life." The life is in Himself—all life's fullness—and if we believe in Him we are brought into union with Him, and because He lives, we live too.

Now because Christ is the truth and the life, He also is the way—that is, the way to heaven and the way to God. But how is He the way? In what manner did Jesus by His life or by His death become a way, or make His life a way to God?

He did it in his incarnation. He was the Son

of God—He became Son of man; thus His wonderful being bridged the enormous chasm between earth and heaven, between the “far country” and the Father’s house. In His humiliation He reaches down to the lowest depth of human sin and need, and in His Divine life He reaches up to the heart of the Father. Thus He is the way from the abysses of sin to the supremest reaches of glory, and on Him whosoever will may go up out of the dust into blessedness.

Christ is the way to God, also, because He revealed God, brought God down into our common life. It was this that made the incarnation so wonderful. Jesus said, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” Philip and the other disciples had been with their Master all the time for three years, knowing Him intimately and seeing His life in its familiar revealings. They loved Him, but they did not dream that what they saw in Him was what their hearts were crying out to see—the beauty and glory of the Father. Philip was thinking of some dazzling splendor, some radiance like a transfiguration, when he pleaded, “Show us the Father.” Instead of this, however, he had been seeing the Father all the time in the sweet, patient, pure, gentle, thoughtful, lowly life of Jesus. We are all apt to make Philip’s mis-

take, looking up to the skies for the glory that is shining close to our feet.

In one of his poems Lowell tells the story of an ancient prophet who made a pilgrimage into the wilderness until he reached Mount Sinai. God's presence had deserted him; and he thought that at Sinai, if anywhere, he should find it again. As he engaged in prayer on the holy mount, expecting some strange and startling answer to his prayers, the moss at his feet unfolded and a violet showed itself through the moss. That was the answer. Then he remembered that just before he left home his little daughter had come running to him, offering him a bouquet of these very violets. They grew at his own door; he saw them every day. He had traveled all that distance for a message that had been whispering itself to him all the time.

Many people miss the richest revealings of God's love because they expect the good they seek to come in some startling or unusual way. We do not have to go up to heaven to find God; He has come down close beside us. We do not need to ask for theophanies and transfigurations—God comes to us in the breaking of bread, in the love of our friends, in the sweet amenities of our homes, in the simplicity of a little child.

Even yet people read the gospels and wonder if God loves them, if God sympathizes with them in their sorrows, if God cares when they have troubles, if God hears and answers their prayers, if God is really gentle, patient, kind, easily approached, if God is indeed merciful, gracious, and long-suffering. Even yet men cry out, "O that I knew where I might find God!" Even yet disciples plead, "Show us the Father." Here is a little story of a child and its mother, which illustrates the slowness of the world to see God in Christ.

"A mother drew her darling to her breast,
 And of her father in a far-off land
 She strove to make the child-heart understand,
 While, with a kiss of twofold love expressed,
 Intent to make his fondness manifest,
 She said, 'Thy father sends his love to thee.'
 The child looked up, as fain the gift to see,
 And from rose-lips, 'Where is it?' came the quest.

"'Where is it?' Foolish child to question thus,
 When all around and in her mother's eyes
 It shone, and in its fullness she could bask.
 Love needs no token. But are we more wise?
 Our heavenly Father sends His love to us.
 'Where is it?' in our ignorance we ask."

Yes, we are like the child. Christ says to us,
 "Your Father sends His love to you." We look

up and round about us, and ask, "Where is it? where is God's love?" Yet all the while we have our New Testament in our hands, with its blessed story of the love, the compassion, the gentleness, the purity, the kindness, the wondrous self-sacrifice of Jesus. We do not think that in seeing Him we are seeing the Father, that the lovely things we behold in Him are really revelations of God. In Christ God indeed came down and lived among men to convince them of His love for them, to make them know that He is their Father, to show them His grace and truth. As a revealer, Christ is the way to the Father.

He is the way also as the Redeemer. God does not love the world because Christ died for it—it is the other way; Christ died for the world because God loved it. But the Scriptures teach very plainly that it was necessary for the Son of God to die to make the way to life and hope and heaven. Somehow the cross opened the way for men to come to God. There was a veil in the temple which hid the holy of holies, the place of God's presence. No one but the priest could pass behind the veil. That meant separation from God because of sin. When Christ was dying, that veil was torn in two as by an invisible hand. This meant that now the way was opened to God for

everyone who would come. Thus Christ became the way to God through His death.

There is another word here. "I am the way . . . no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me." Not only is He the way to God, but there is no other way. To reject Christ is therefore to reject life and to close on one's self the only way to God. The mercy of God is wide as the sea. "Whosoever will may come. Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." But there is only one way to come. Christ is the way to God. You need not vex yourself about theological questions. You need not be disturbed about the articles of the creed which you cannot understand. Christ is the way to God. To love Christ is to love God. To have Christ for your friend is to have God for your friend. To rest in Christ is to be in the clasp of the everlasting arms.

Thus Christ is the way to peace, the peace of God. He is the way to happiness. He is the way to blessing and to all that is good. Christ is all that we need. The trouble with many of us is that we think we can find the satisfying of our wants and hungers in places or things or circumstances.

"O heart, thou need'st not fly away
To find thy rest.

Peace seeks for thee, if thou wilt stay
And just be blessed.
Fold up thy wings, and sit at Jesus' feet;
There wilt thou find thy heaven—a rest complete.'

For a practical thought, set together the question of Thomas and the answer of Jesus. "How can we know the way?" "I am the way." We are all the while asking Thomas's question. We come to points every day where we are bewildered, and know not where to go or what to do. We see no path before us. Sometimes it is a question of duty. Sometimes it is a choice that must be made between two courses. And we see no escape from it, no hope of relief or help, no way out of it.

Or it may concern life in a larger sense. What am I? Why am I here? What is there beyond the bourn of death? What is God? Where is He? Where am I going? How can I find Him? What and where is heaven? How can I get there? Everyone who thinks at all asks such questions at some time. "How can we know the way?"

To all such questions Jesus answers, "I am the way." He is the way through all perplexities. He is the way out of all trouble into comfort, peace, joy. He is the way through all danger

into safety. He is the way out of doubt into faith. He is the way from sin to holiness. He is the way from death to life. He is the way from earth to heaven.

Elsewhere He says, "I am the door." A door is for entrance. We pass in through the door to the beauty, the comfort, the joy, the love, within. Christ is the door to everything that is worthy and good and blessed and eternal. There is only one door; if we will not enter at it, we must stay out in the darkness and sorrow.

One of Christ's great sayings is this: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness." We may not know where we are going. We may not understand the things we are experiencing. We may be in sorrow. Loss may be stripping us bare. We may seem to be in a calamity. But if we are walking close to Christ, we are not in darkness. All is plain to Him, and that is enough.

"I know not—the way is so misty—
The joys or the griefs it shall bring,
What clouds are o'erhanging the future,
What flowers by the roadside shall spring;
But there's One who will journey beside me,
Nor in weal, nor in woe, will forsake;
And this is my solace and comfort—
'He knoweth the way that I take.'"

“How can we know the way?” “I am the way.” No one can ever be lost with Christ. No one can ever get out of the way with Him. The greatest and saddest of all trials is to be in some trouble and to be alone, to have no one with us. Without Christ what can any one do in the darkness, or in the storm, or in the floods? How could any one find the way home through this world’s gloom and peril without Christ? Having Christ we do not need to have to understand things. He understands—and that is enough.

A saintly woman suffering for weary months in painful illness said to her pastor one day, shortly before she went to heaven: “I have such a lovely robin that sings outside my window. In the early morning, as I lie here, he serenades me.” Then, as a smile brightened her thin features, she added, “I love him because he sings in the rain.” That is the most beautiful thing about the robin. When the storm has silenced almost every other song bird, the robin sings on—sings in the rain. That is the way the Christian who is with Christ may do. Anybody can sing in the sunshine; you and I should sing on when the sun has gone down, or when clouds pour out their rains, for Christ is with us. We should sing in the rain.

Why should we be afraid, though we cannot

see the path, though all seems inextricable confusion about us, though circumstances appear to be against us? Christ is the way and we never can be harmed and never can get lost while He is with us. To all our questions and fears He answers, "I am the way," and that is enough.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air ;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

But we must remember that there is no other way to God, to the Father's house, no other way home, no other who can be to us the way in life's darkness and danger. "I am the way no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

Some of us scarcely know where we are or whither we are going. We are not sure of our ground—whether we are going forward or groping backward. Perhaps we are not sure of our beliefs—we are troubled about some of the doctrines. Perhaps we are not sure we are saved. We are like men lost in a deep, trackless forest, not knowing the way out.

Suppose you found yourself thus lost some day, wandering helplessly, hopelessly, and a man came to you who knew all the tangle of the forest,

offering to be your guide, to lead you through into the broad, open plain—and to your home; what would you do? To-day, when you are in doubt and fear and perplexity, sure of nothing, in peril of being lost, not knowing what to do or where to turn, One comes to you, One who knows all the way, One who knows all about life because He has lived it all, and He offers to lead you through all the bewildering tangles, out of all the doubt and fears, out of the gloom and the danger—to God, to the Father's house—home. What should you do? What will you do?

“Thank God, thank God, the Man is found—
Sure-footed, knowing well the ground.
He knows the road, for this the way
He traveled once, as on this day.
He is our messenger beside;
He is our door and path and guide.”

III

PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“Pray without ceasing.”—I. THESS. v. 17.

‘No help but prayer,
A breath that fleets beyond this vain world
And touches Him that made it.’

Rather, as friends sit sometimes hand in hand,
Nor mar with words the sweet speech of their eyes;
So in soft silence let us oftener bow,
Nor try with words to make God understand.
Longing is prayer; upon its wings we rise
To where the breath of heaven beats upon our brow.’

III

PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

WHAT place should prayer have in a Christian life? Should we pray little or much? Should we confine our praying to certain days—Sundays, for example; or to certain hours or moments of our days—mornings, for example, then evenings? Should we pray concerning certain things, certain affairs, portions only of our life? Are there things we have no permission to take to God in prayer? Should we pray only in certain places—in our accustomed closet or room at home, or in places set apart for divine worship? Is there any place where we may not pray?

There is a word of Saint Paul's which seems to answer all these questions. "Pray without ceasing." That means, pray always and everywhere. There is nothing we may not take to God in prayer, asking Him to help us do it. There is no hour of the day when we may not turn to God and find Him ready to hear and bless us. The gates of prayer are never shut by day or by night.

There is no place where we may not pray. God is as accessible to us on the street, in the desert, in the midst of a great storm at sea, or in the most debased spot of the earth as He is in our own sacred closet of prayer, in a consecrated building, or at the Lord's table. "Pray without ceasing."

But how is it possible to obey this teaching? Are we to spend all our time on our knees? This certainly is not the meaning. We have our duties, our tasks, our work to do. Suppose that men should spend all their days at home, praying, for a month, for a year, what would become of their business? What would their families do? Suppose that women should give up all their duties—their household duties, their social duties, all the work that now fills their hands—and literally pray without ceasing the remainder of their days, would they please God?

Evidently we are not to interpret the lesson that way. We are put here to work. "Six days shalt thou labor." Our duties fill our hands every hour. We sin against God when we neglect any of these. I can conceive even of a kind of praying that would be sinful—praying when some imperative task demands attention, when some one needs help, neglecting a duty of love, that you may attend some religious service

or keep some appointment for devotion. It is told in monastic legends of Saint Francesca that although she never wearied in her religious duties, yet if during her prayers she was summoned away by any domestic service, she would close her book cheerfully, saying that a wife and mother, when called upon, must quit her God at the altar to find Him in the duties and tasks of her home. There are times when prayer is not the duty of the hour. What, then, are we to understand by the counsel, "Pray without ceasing"?

For one thing, prayer is part of the expression of the Christian's very life. One who does not pray is not a Christian, is not a religious man. He may be a moral man. A gentleman said the other day of a certain prominent business man, "He is the most moral and the least religious man I ever knew." He meant that the man is honest, honorable, just, generous, charitable, very careful and exact in all his relations to men, but that toward God he is utterly indifferent, never thinks of Him, never recognizes Him in any way, never prays. So far as he is concerned, there is no God. This man would not himself admit as much. He would say he believes in God. But practically he is an agnostic or an atheist. He is

utterly without religion, which means knowing God, recognizing God as Father and Friend, living in personal relations with God.

When the Lord would make Ananias understand that Saul was now a Christian, he said, "Behold he prayeth." When a man begins really to pray there is no doubt of his conversion. Saul prayed a great deal before he accepted Christ. He was a rigid Pharisee and was very religious, so far as forms of religion were concerned. But he had never prayed before as he prayed that day after he had seen Christ. The Christian should know God intimately. One writes, "I talk to God as to a companion, in prayer and praise, and our communion is joy." That is religion, and prayer is the heart of it. It is not a matter of times and places. Wherever we go we are with God. Whatever we are doing, our hearts are going out to Him.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air."

God is our Father and we are His children. We can easily think of the child of a good, noble, and loving father, who is entirely out of relations with that father. One was telling of a young man who has not spoken to his father for five

years. He is estranged from him. The father is a most worthy man—the fault is not his. He has a heart of love—he loves his estranged son and longs to give him back his place of confidence and honor. But all these years the son has lived as if he had no father in the world.

God is our Father, with infinite love in His heart for us, ready and eager to help us and bless us in every way. We can cut ourselves off from Him if we will. Religion, faith, is putting ourselves in the children's place toward God. We do not then pray to make God willing to give good things to us—He is always willing to give. The Master said: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Prayer then is going to God, believing in His love for us, knowing that He wants to help us, and asking Him as children ask their parents for the things we need.

The true child has always the child's place in the home. He is not granted the privileges of a child only on certain days or at certain hours. To pray without ceasing is to be always in happy relations of love with our Father. One tells this pleasant incident:—

“ My little girl to-night with childish glee,
Although her months have numbered not two score,
Escaped her nurse, and at my study door,
With tiny fingers rapping, spoke to me.
Though faint her words, I heard them tremblingly
Fall from her lips, as if the darkness bore
Its weight upon her. ‘ Father’s child ! ’ No more
I waited for, but straightway willingly
I brought the sweet intruder into light,
With happy laughter.”

If we always keep ourselves in the relation of children to God—loving, obedient, trustful, submissive to His will—we shall really pray without ceasing. Every act will then be a prayer. Every word will be a song of praise. All we do will then be reverent worship.

Again, to pray without ceasing is to do everything with prayer. This does not mean that every piece of work we undertake must be begun with a formal act of prayer—stopping, kneeling down, and offering a spoken petition. To pray without ceasing is to have the heart always in converse with God. It is to live so near to God that we can talk with Him wherever we go, ask Him questions and get His answers, seek His help, His wisdom, His guidance, and obtain what we ask.

There is no habit that we should more sedu-

lously form than that of talking with God about everything we do. We are often told that we should begin every day with prayer. That is very fit and beautiful. The first face our eyes see in the morning should be Christ's. His too should be the first voice we hear, and to Him our first words should be spoken. Henry Drummond tells us that ten minutes in the morning, yes, two minutes, spent really with Christ, will change all our day for us. A day without prayer is a day of darkness and sadness.

It is often said that we should count that day lost in which no kindness is done, no deed of love to any one, no help given. But sadder far is a day without prayer. It is a day without God, without heaven's light shining into it, a day unblest. The morning you forget to pray is an unhappy morning for you. One writes thus of a prayerless day:—

“The sunlight streaming o'er my temple gate
 With ray beguiling, soft and fair,
 Made me at dawn neglect until too late
 To bar it with the wonted prayer.

“Two fair-clad robbers, Duty and Delight,
 Won entrance and engaged my mind,
 While dark, unnoticed, and in rags bedight
 Worry and Folly crept up behind.

“To-night there’s ruin in my Holy Place,
Its vessels gone, its treasures spent—
Contentment, faith, and every hard-won grace
Displaced and spoiled—Lord, I repent.”

But besides beginning each day with prayer, we may do each several act all the day with prayer. We may form the habit of praying at every step as we go along. That was part of St. Paul’s meaning when he said, “Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” He would have us include every word we speak as well as every deed we do. Think what it would mean to have every word that passes our lips winged and blessed with prayer—always to breathe a little prayer before we speak, as we speak. This would put heavenly sweetness into all our speech. It would make all our words kindly, loving, inspiring words, words that will edify and minister grace to them that hear. We can scarcely think of one using bitter words, back-biting words, unholy words, if his heart be always full of prayer, if he have trained himself to pray always before he speaks.

But we are to do all our deeds, too, in the name of the Lord Jesus. That means that we should do everything for Him, to please Him. If we could get this lesson learned, if we would

really pray without ceasing, how beautiful our lives would be! How well we should do all our work! Only think of a man in business doing all his day's business in a spirit of prayer—breathing a little prayer as he makes a bargain, as he writes a business letter, as he talks with other men. Think of a woman amid her household cares taking everything to God for His blessing, for His approval, for His direction. These are not by any means impossible suppositions. Indeed, this is the way a Christian is to live, should always live—doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

We are exhorted elsewhere, too, to make all our requests known to God in prayer. We do not know what we miss by leaving God out of so much of our life. We wonder often why we fail, why so little comes of our efforts, why we do not get along better with people, why we are not happy, why joy is so wanting in our experience, why we are so easily fretted and vexed and made discontented, why we fall so easily into surliness and bad temper. It is because we cease to pray.

“O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.”

You say you haven't time to pray so much. "Haven't time?" You have time for everything else—time for many things, perhaps, of questionable importance. Have you not time to look into God's face for a moment before you begin a new piece of work, before you make a new investment, before you start on a business trip, before you go out to spend an evening, before you open a new book? "Haven't time?" Does it seem wasted time when you stop to eat your meals? Do you regard your hours spent in sleep as lost hours? Does being courteous waste time? Nor is time spent in getting God's blessing ever lost time. The Sabbath hours given to worship are not wasted hours.

But really the habit of unceasing prayer does not require time. It is but looking into God's face and saying, "Help me in this." "Bless me as I do this."

Francis of Assisi was mighty in prayer. God's blessing seemed to be on everything he did, on every word he spoke. One who loved him desired to learn the secret of his devotions, and watched him to see how he prayed. All he saw was this—again and again Francis was heard saying, with bowed head and clasped hands, the name of Jesus—"Jesus! Jesus!" That was the

way he prayed. He did everything in that blessed name, and all the power of Jesus was in what he did. It wastes no time to speak that name as we enter a new path, or begin a new task, or go out to a new duty. Yet that is what it is to pray without ceasing.

It is well for us to learn this lesson—to take everything to God in prayer, to pray as we go from task to task—always silently, unostentatiously. We need to guard against making a show of our praying, talking about it. But we may form the habit of putting up little word-prayers continually. When you feel an inclination to speak bitterly, to answer sharply; when you have been stung by another's speech or act; when you are tempted to refuse a request for help, to do some selfish thing, to pass by a human need, to speak an untruth, lift up your heart in the prayer, "Jesus, help me to do thy will." Or if you meet a sudden temptation and are in danger of being swept away, look up and cry, "Jesus, save me!"

Do you suppose that God is far off from you these days, any day? Do you suppose that Christ ever leaves you alone for an instant, anywhere you may chance to be? No, no; He is nearer to you all the time than your dearest,

nearest friend, now close by your side. Believe this, and when you feel any need, any heart hunger, any sense of loneliness, the creeping over you of any shadow of danger, the coming upon you of any enemy; when you fear you will fall, or stumble, or say some word you would not say, or let some feeling into your heart you would not admit there; if you are growing discontented or discouraged, speak His name. That will be prayer enough.

It is impossible to tell of the blessing of such a spirit and habit of prayer. Those who have not learned to pray thus "without ceasing" have no conception of what they are missing. If we all had learned this lesson, what a company of overcoming Christians we would be! The world would have little power over us. We would tread it under our feet. We would be strong where now we are so weak. We would be victorious over temptation, where now we fail so sadly. If you knew that Christ was always actually walking with you, how strong you would be!

"Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care,
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

Some people seem to think that all prayer is request, asking favors from God. They never go to God unless they want Him to give them something, to do something for them, or to get them out of some trouble or danger. But if we pray only when we have a favor to ask, we do not love God as we should. Really, request is but a small portion of truest praying.

You have a dear human friend whom you love very much. You greatly enjoy being with this friend. You say it strengthens you, cheers you, helps you, to spend an hour with him. Now when you are with this friend, what do you talk about? Do you do nothing but make requests and ask favors, and beg your friend to do things for you? I am quite sure that is not all you do. Ofttimes you pass the whole hour that you are together and do not make one request nor ask one favor. You commune—that is the word. You sit together, your friend and you, and talk of many things that are dear to you both. Then sometimes you do not talk at all. It is just enough to be with your friend, to have his presence near you, to look into his face, to know that he loves you. It strengthens you just to be with him.

The same is true of communion with Christ.

It is not all request. We come to Him many times with no definite favor to ask. We want just to be with Him, to look into His face, to sit in the sweet atmosphere of His presence, to let His love pour into our hearts:—

“It is not prayer—
This clamor of our eager wants
That fills the air
With wearying, selfish plaints.

“It is true prayer
To seek the Giver more than gift;
God’s life to share,
And love—for this our cry to lift.”

There is no lesson we need to take more to heart than this lesson of prayer. This is not a praying age. Every call is to work, to activity. We are living in most strenuous times. The pressure of active duty is tremendous. In all departments of life this is true. Men have little time for leisure. In the church, too, the call is to activity. The cry is for the evangelizing of the world. It is a missionary age in which we are living. Christians hear but little about the duty of meditation, of devotion, of prayer—they are called rather out into the field to work, to hasten the coming of the kingdom.

This is well. Every redeemed life should be

consecrated to service. But there is danger in this intense activity. The danger is not that we become too strenuous in carrying the gospel to men—this never could be—but that we get too little quiet in our lives for the cultivation of our own heart piety. There must be root before there can be strong branches and much fruit. We must sit at Christ's feet to be fed before we can go out to feed others. Not a word should be said to restrain earnestness, to check enthusiasm in Christ's work, to hold any one back from the service of Christ. But in our much serving and work we should never forget the necessity of Bible reading and communion with Christ, to prepare us for the noble work we are striving to do. All the best things of Christian life are the fruit of silent meditation.

Life is not easy for any of us. We can live grandly, purely, Christianly, only by being much with Christ. We will rob ourselves of Divine blessing, of beauty of character, of power in service, if we fail to make room in all our busy days for quiet retreats from noise and strife, where we may sit at Christ's feet to hear His words and lie on His bosom that we may absorb His spirit, to prepare us for the toil and the witnessing.

Father Ryan, a Roman Catholic poet-priest of

the South, writes thus of "the valley of silence":—

In the hush of the valley of silence
 I dream all the songs that I sing ;
 And the music floats down the dim valley
 Till each finds a word for a wing,
 That to hearts, like the dove of the deluge,
 A message of peace they may bring.

But far out on the deep there are billows
 That never shall break on the beach ;
 And I have heard songs in the silence
 That never shall float into speech ;
 And I have had dreams in the valley
 Too lofty for language to reach.

And I have seen thoughts in the valley—
 Ah, me, how my spirit was stirred !
 And they wear holy veils on their faces ;
 Their footsteps can scarcely be heard :
 They pass through the valley like virgins
 Too pure for the touch of a word.

Do you ask me the place of the valley,
 Ye hearts that are harrowed by care ?
 It lieth afar between mountains,
 And God and His angels are there :
 One is the dark mountain of sorrow,
 And one the bright mountain of prayer.

It is only in the "valley of silence" with Christ
 that we can dream the dreams and see the visions

which we would translate into noble life, Christly character, and worthy deed, out among men. We must hide away much in prayer if we would get strength for valiant struggle and effective service for our Master.

IV

A PARABLE OF GROWTH

“I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.”—HOSEA xiv. 5, 6.

“God’s Spirit falls on thee as dewdrops on a rose,
If but like a rose to Him thy heart unclose.”

“Dear God! Let me grow from day to day,
Clinging and sunny and bright!
Though planted in shade, Thy window is near,
And my leaves may turn to the light.”

IV

A PARABLE OF GROWTH

GOD'S forgiveness is wonderful. If we fail, He gives us another chance. Even the saddest ruin of a life may be built into a holy temple of God. We have it all in a chapter in Hosea. We have the Divine pleading: "O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Then the way back is marked out—confession, repentance, consecration. Then comes the assurance: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for Mine anger is turned away." Then follows this wonderful promise of restoration and prosperity: "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon."

It is a picture of beauty and fruitfulness. There had been bareness and desolation. Sin is drought. It causes blight. Every flower fades and every green thing withers. But God's love is like rain.

It falls on the parched life and changes it to garden loveliness.

The prophet's words contain a parable of spiritual growth. We may note some of the features, for they belong to all true Christian life.

One of these qualities is purity. "He shall blossom as the lily." The other day a friend sent me half a dozen white lilies, and all the days since they have kept their freshness and their unblemished whiteness. They have preached their little sermon to every one who has come in, saying, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Have you ever noticed how earnestly this lesson of purity is taught in the Bible? Thus in one of the Psalms we have the question and the answer: "Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah? and who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart."

Then James tells us that we are to have "pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father." He tells us also that we are to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world." We are not to flee away from the world, for our duty is in it, and we must be in it to bless it, to do good in it, to be light in its darkness, to comfort its sorrow; but while in the world we are not to be-

come stained by its sin or to have our garments soiled by its evil. Some one tells of seeing an enameled plant growing on the edge of a coal mine. Though the black dust floated about it continually, not a particle of it adhered to the plant, and its snowy whiteness took no stain. This illustrates the purity which should always be found in the Christian life—in the world, but unspotted by its evil. That is the way the Master passed through this world. That is the way He would have us go through it.

Something else is necessary, however—more than our own good resolve—if our hearts and lives are to be like the lily in its immaculate whiteness. We need both Divine cleansing and Divine keeping. The Rev. F. B. Meyer tells of calling one day, in his pastoral rounds, on a washerwoman whom he found hanging the last of her day's washing on the line. During his brief stay in her house there came a thick and sudden fall of snow. When he came out the ground was white. "Your clothes do not look as white as they did when I came in," Mr. Meyer remarked. "The clothes are just the same," the woman answered, "but what can stand against God's perfect white?" Compared with the snow, the whitest garments look soiled and dingy. We

think we are reasonably pure and good, but when we stand beside the holy Christ we see that we are unholy and unworthy and need cleansing. We must pray the prayer, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Only Christ can cleanse us. Only He can keep us pure and clean. Purity is one of the qualities of the ideal Christian life.

Another quality of a true spiritual life is root. "He shall . . . cast forth his roots as Lebanon." Probably the reference is to the cedars of Lebanon. Lilies are pure and gentle, but they are very frail, with shallow rooting, easily torn out of the ground. No one simile tells all the story of a noble and worthy life. The cedar sends its roots down deep into the earth, anchoring it so securely that the wildest storm cannot tear it loose. Purity is essential in a Christian life. Gentleness and delicacy are un-failing characteristics of a Christlike spirit. But there must also be strength. It is never easy to live well in this world. We cannot hope to be kept always in a shelter of tender love, where no storm beats, where there are no struggles. Jesus Christ, God's best beloved Son, faced the most terrible temptations. His life was exposed to all manner of trials. No follower of His can pass

through life and miss antagonism. There must be strength to withstand the tempest as well as purity to look into God's face. Roots are important as well as whiteness. The trees that grow on the mountains are deeply and strongly rooted. So if we would stand true, steadfast, unmovable, as we are bidden to stand, we must be anchored by an unwavering faith in Christ.

The root is not the part of the tree we admire the most. Indeed, it is not seen at all. No one praises it. It creeps down into the dark earth and is hidden. But we know its importance. It feeds the tree's life and then it holds the tree in its place amid the storms. Every strong character must have a deep root. Shallow rooting means a feeble power of resistance. Because it lacked root, the seed sown on rocky ground withered away in the first hot sun. We must be deeply rooted in Christ if we would endure unto the end.

It takes both the gentleness of the lily and the strength of the cedar to make a true Christian character. Gentleness without strength is not noble—it is weakness. Strength without gentleness is not great—it is only brute force. But sweetness and strength combined yield heroic manhood. Such a man was Luther. Such a

man was Cromwell. "Kiss me, Hardy," said Lord Nelson, dying. Such a man was Jesus Christ.

Another quality in the beautiful life is breadth. "His branches shall spread." If there be strength with deep rooting, there will also be the extending of boughs. Life broadens as it grows. We all begin as babies, but we ought not to continue babies. We ought to grow into men, putting away childish things. Some people, however, seem never to advance in spiritual life.

One of the strange freaks of Japanese horticulture is the cultivation of dwarf trees. The Japanese grow forest giants in flowerpots. Some of these strange miniature trees are a century old, and are only two or three feet high. The gardener, instead of trying to get them to grow to their best, takes infinite pains to keep them little. His purpose is to grow dwarfs, not giant trees. From the time of their planting they are repressed, starved, crippled, stunted. When buds appear, they are nipped off. So the tree remains only a dwarf all its life.

Some Christian people seem to do the same thing with their lives. They do not allow themselves to grow. They rob themselves of spiritual nourishment, restrain the noble impulses of their

nature, shut out of their hearts the power of the Holy Spirit, and are only dwarf Christians when they might be strong in Christ Jesus, with the abundant life which the Master wants all His followers to have.

There is not enough breadth in many lives. We ought to grow in height, reaching up to the fullness of the stature of Christ. We ought to grow in the outreach of our lives. We ought to know more of God and of heavenly things to-morrow than we do to-day. We are told that if we follow on we shall know, that if we do the little portion of the will of God we understand we shall be led on to see and know more of that will. We ought to grow in love also, becoming more patient, more gentle, more thoughtful, more unselfish day by day, extending the reach of our unselfishness and helpfulness.

There is something else about these spreading branches. A little farther down in the chapter we read this: "They that dwell under his shadow shall return." The children of men find shelter and rest under the shadow of the good man's wide-spreading life. We all know people of whom that is true—others come and live beneath the shadow of their love, their strength, their beneficence. They live to serve others, not to be

served by others. They seek always to do good to every one they meet. Their doors are ever open to those who come needing counsel, cheer, help, and hope. They are an unspeakable blessing and comfort in the world. Their lives are like trees which cast a wide shade in which children play, beneath which the weary stop in their journey to rest. Some verses by Alice W. Bailey¹ fit in here :—

I know a nature like a tree ;
Men seek its shade instinctively.
It is a choir for singing birds,
A covert for the flocks and herds.
It grows and grows, nor questions why,
But reaches up into the sky,
And stretches down into the soil,
Finding no trouble in its toil.
It flaunts no scar to tell of pain,
Self-healed its wounds have closed again
Unaided by its pensioners ;
And yet I know that great heart stirs
To each appeal and claim, indeed
Leans to their lack and needs their need.

There is something very admirable in the beauty of such a life as this picture suggests—a tree putting out its branches to make grateful shade and shelter for earth's hunted ones, hungry ones, weary ones, sorrowing ones. Too many people

¹ *The Outlook*, June 27, 1903.

seek to broaden their lives only to gather the more into their grasp for their own selfish ends—not to bless the world, but to gain the world for their own enriching. Others there are who seek to draw people to them, but whose branches do not make a safe and wholesome shelter for the weary and the troubled, but rather a poisoned and perilous shadow in which the innocent are harmed or even ruined. We who are Christians should be like trees of blessing, under which others may come, sure of finding only comfort and good.

Another of the qualities of the spiritual life suggested here is beauty. "His beauty shall be as the olive tree." Beauty is a quality of the complete Christian life. Writers note the fact that the beauty of the olive is peculiar. There are other trees which are more brilliant, more graceful in form. "The palm at once impresses by its elegance, the apple tree by its blossoms, the orange by its golden fruit and unique fragrance, the tulip tree by its gorgeous flowers. The olive, however, is by no means picturesque—it often looks even stunted and shabby. . . . But the soft delicate beauty grows upon you until, stirred by the wind, the shimmering silver of its leaves makes a picture. . . . So Christian character is often not

in the least brilliant, heroic, or striking. The noblest men and women are modest, homely, simple souls; yet they reveal a mild and serious grace which is, in truth, the perfection of beauty.”¹

Thus the olive tree becomes a true symbol of Christlike character—not showy, not flashing its brilliance in the eyes of men, but humble, quiet, adorned with the beauty which pleases Christ. Peter has some good words about true adorning for women: “Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

There is a clause in Saint Paul’s cluster of “whatsoever” which make up his picture of noble, Christlike character that fits in here—“whatsoever things are lovely.” We must never leave out the things that are lovely when we are making up our ideal of spiritual life. There are unlovely things in the dispositions of too many people. We who are Christians should seek always to be rid of whatsoever is not beautiful. Our daily prayer should be, “Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.”

¹ The Rev. W. L. Watkinson.

Saint Paul told Timothy that the word of God is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction." We know what correction is. Young people at school write exercises, and their teachers go over them and correct them, pointing out the mistakes. The Bible, if we read it as we should, corrects our faulty essays in living, shows us the errors in our lives, the defects in our characters, the flaws in our dispositions. What then? "Count that day happy," says Ruskin, "when you have discovered a fault in yourself"—not happy because the fault is there, but because you know it now, that you may cure it.

Another quality of a true life suggested in this parable of growth is fragrance. "His smell as Lebanon." "A good name is better than precious oil." Another of Saint Paul's "whatsoevers" is very suggestive—"whatsoever things are of good report." There is an aroma that belongs to every life, which is the composite product of the things that are said about the person. Some men live beautifully, sweetly, patiently, unselfishly, helpfully, joyfully, speaking only good words, never rash, intemperate, unloving words, and walking among men carefully, humbly, reverently; and the odor of their lives is like that of Mary's ointment. Other men are ruled by self or by the

world or by greed—they are of the earth, earthy. They are untruthful, resentful, unloving, of hasty speech—and we know what the effluence of such lives is.

There is something very mysterious about perfume. No one can describe it. You cannot take a photograph of it. Yet it is a very essential quality of the flower. The same is true of that strange thing we call influence. Influence is the aroma of a life. The most important thing about our life is this subtle, imponderable, indefinable, mysterious element of our personality which is known as influence. This is really all of us that counts in our final impression on other lives.

“His smell as Lebanon.” Lebanon’s gardens and trees and fruits made delicious fragrance which filled all the region round about. Every Christian life ought to be fragrant, but there is only one way to make it so. Men gather the perfume from acres of roses and it fills only a little phial. Your influence, the perfume of your life, is gathered from all the acres of your years—all that has grown upon those acres. If it is to be like the essence of ten thousand roses—sweet, pure, undefiled, your life must be all well watched, clean, sweet, holy, loving, true. Only roses must grow on your fields. The evil as well as the

good is gathered and helps to make the composite influence of your life.

We know how easily one's influence is hurt, how little follies and indiscretions in one's conduct or behavior take away from the sweetness of one's reputation. Says the author of Ecclesiastes, "Dead flies cause the oil of the perfumer to send forth an evil odor; so doth a little folly outweigh wisdom and honor." We need to think seriously of this matter. We are not always careful enough about keeping out the dead flies. There are many men who are good in the general tenor of their lives, godly, prayerful, consistent in larger ways, but the perfume of whose names is rendered unsavory by little dead flies in their common living. They are not always careful to keep their word; they are not prompt in paying their debts; they are not watchful of their speech; they are not loyal in their friendships; they are indiscreet in their relations with others; they are wanting in refinement or courtesy; they are resentful—we all know how many of these dead flies there are which cause the ointment of some people's names to send forth an unsavory odor.

We need to watch our lives in the smallest matters if we would keep our names sweet wherever we are known. Influence is most im-

portant. It is our mightiest force for good or evil. Let us keep it pure and good for Christ. Let us keep Christ always in it.

These are some of the lessons which this Old Testament nature-parable suggests. These are some of the essential qualities of a true Christian life. It should be pure. It should be deeply rooted in Christ and strong. It should spread out its branches and become a shelter and comfort to other lives. It should be beautiful with the beauty of humility, truth, and love. It should be fragrant with the aroma of a sweet, holy, and loving life.

Is the picture discouraging by reason of its lofty qualities? Is it so high in its excellence that we seem unable to reach it? At a recent commencement one of the speakers told of two scenes he had witnessed. The first was this: He was in an artist's studio when the artist was about beginning his work on a canvas. He was putting a little daub of paint here, another daub there. There certainly was no semblance of anything beautiful on the canvas. Indeed, there seemed no evidence of any design, no trace of any form or figure, no clue to what the artist meant to do.

That was the first scene. This was the second:

A large company of people standing before a great picture, all admiring it and praising its beauty. This was the finished painting of which the artist, that day a year or two before, was making the first rough outline.

Let us not be discouraged because to-day the picture has almost none of the beauty which is visioned in the great ideal we have been studying. We are only beginning it. Let us continue at our holy task until in every line it glows with the loveliness of the ideal. But remember we cannot dream the vision upon the canvas—we can put it there only by patient thought, effort, and discipline.

Then let us not forget that God will work with us in our efforts to grow into the Divine beauty, if only we seek His grace and help. There is a story of an artist-pupil who had wrought long at his canvas and was discouraged because the noble vision came so slowly, because his hand seemed so unskillful. Then one day he sat by his easel, weary and disheartened, and fell asleep. While he slept his master came and, taking the brush, with a few swift touches finished the picture. That is the way our Master does with us when we are doing our best and seem only to fail. He

comes in the stillness and puts His own hand to our work and completes it.

There is one sentence in this parable of growth which is full of inspiration and hope: "I will be as the dew unto Israel." In the East the dew is almost like rain with us. When there is no dew, everything burns up. When there is dew, the thirsty fields are refreshed. All the wonderful beauty described in these words is produced by the night-mist or dew.

Now God says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel." What dew does for withering gardens and fields, God says He will do for His people if they but repent and return to Him. He does not say He will send the dew—He says He will Himself be as the dew. So the dew which renews and refreshes withered lives is God Himself. Let us learn well this great truth, that God would put Himself into our withered lives. That is the heart of our religion. We are not set merely to copy a picture upon canvas, to imitate a lovely model held before us. Christianity tells us of a Divine Spirit who with unseen hands comes to fashion the picture upon our spirits. "I will be as the dew unto Israel." What the dew or the rain is to the withered fields, God's Spirit will be to

our bare, withered lives. We need only to yield ourselves to this gentle Holy Spirit.

Some of us are perplexed to know how we ever can grow into the purity, the strength, the breadth, the usefulness, the beauty, the sweetness of Christ. Imagine a field after long drought, its foliage drooping, its flowers withering, everything on it dying, perplexed and wondering how it ever can grow into garden beauty. Then a cloud comes up out of the sea and pours its gentle rains for hours upon the parched ground. The question is answered. All the field has to do is to open its bosom to the treasures of the rain. All we have to do in our spiritual need is to let God's Spirit into our hearts.

“Receive Him as the dew into thy heart,
O thirsty one, who long His grace hast sought.
Dew forms in stillness; struggle not, nor strive;
What thou dost need to learn is to receive.

“The air surrounding thee is full of God,
With love and life and blessing for thee stored;
Get cool and quiet, and the dew will fall—
A little at a time, not once for all.”

V

THE BEAUTY OF QUIETNESS

“In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.”—
ISAIAH xxx. 15.

“There the dews of quiet fall,
Singing birds and soft winds stray ;
Shall the tender Heart of all
Be less kind than they?”—*J. G. Whittier.*

V

THE BEAUTY OF QUIETNESS

A QUIET life has many points of beauty. It has poise, the lack of which is always a serious blemish. It has self-mastery, which is kingliness. Quietness is the condition of receptiveness. Some people make so much noise that they hear none of the great and noble voices which are speaking continually in their ears words of wisdom. Quietness favors thought and meditation. Some of us never give ourselves time to think, and hence we never have any words worth while to speak.

It would seem that anybody could keep still and quiet. We would say that it requires no exertion. It is activity that is hard—it ought to be easy to rest. It takes energy to speak—it should be easy just to be silent.

But we all know that few things are harder for most people than to be still. Our lives are like the ocean in their restlessness. They cannot be comprised and confined within narrow limits. This is one of the proofs of our greatness and our

immortality. Life is vast and ever in motion. Dead things have no trouble in keeping still. A stone is never restless. The lower the quality of life, the easier it is for it to be quiet. The human soul was made for God, and its very greatness renders its repose and quiet the most difficult of all its attainments.

Yet the lesson of quietness is set for us again and again in the Scriptures. We are told that the effect of righteousness is quietness. We are specially exhorted to "study to be quiet," to make it the aim of our life to be still; to make a study of it as something to be learned, as one would learn an art or train one's self in beauty of living. In the margin the language is even stronger—"Be ambitious to be quiet." Think of human ambitions—to be rich, to be honored, to have power, to do great things! Quietness must, therefore, be one of the most desirable of all qualities in life. We are to be ambitious to be quiet. Another saying of the New Testament is, referring to women, "The apparel of a meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of God." Quietness is extolled, too, as a privilege in a noisy world. "A dry morsel and quietness therewith is better than a feast with strife and contention."

Quietness is evidently a mark of high culture. On the mountain the prophet saw the wild convulsions of nature—the storm, the earthquake, and the fire—but in none of these was God manifested. Then followed “the voice of gentle stillness,” and that was God. Yet there are many people who think that noise is strength, that quietness lacks robustness and vigor. They suppose the more noise a speaker makes, the greater orator he is; that the louder one’s voice in praying, the more power the man has in prayer. But noise is not eloquence. Mr. Beecher used to say that when he was speaking and had no thoughts, nothing to say, he thundered, and the people were greatly moved. The greatest preacher is the one who the most deeply impresses other lives, turning them from sin to holiness, from lower to higher things.

The common impression probably is that people who make the most bluster and show in their callings are the greatest workers, accomplish the most, produce the deepest, best impressions. But this is not true. The best Christian workers anywhere are those who make the least noise. They live deeply, dwelling in the valley of silence. We never can do our best anywhere if we have not learned to be quiet.

“ We mar our work for God by noise and bustle ;
Can we not do our part and not be heard ?
Why should we care that men should see us
With our tools, and praise the skill with which we use them ?
And oftentimes we chafe, and think it hard
That we should lay our great and costly stones
For other men to build on and get praised,
While our names are forgotten or passed o'er.”

In all departments of life it is the quiet forces that effect the most. How silently all day long the sunbeams fall upon the fields and gardens! They make no noise. Yet what cheer, what benediction, what renewal of life, what inspirations of beauty they diffuse! How silently the flowers bloom, and yet what sweetness they pour upon the air! How silently the stars move on in their majestic marches round God's throne! They utter no voice. Yet they are vast worlds, or they are central suns with systems of worlds revolving round them. How silently God's angels work, stepping with noiseless tread through our homes, performing ever their quiet ministries for us and about us! Who ever hears the flutter of the angels' wings or the whisper of their tongues? Yet they ever throng the air and are continually bearing to us their messages of cheer, joy, hope, and comfort, and are ceaselessly engaged in their ministries of protection, guidance, and help.

How silently God Himself works! He is never absent from our side. He never ceases blessing us for a moment. He brings us gifts while we sleep and is gone before we awake. He comes so quietly that He never disturbs us. He comes into our sick rooms, stands beside our beds of pain, and sits down beside us in our time of sorrow and gives comfort, but we never hear Him. He makes no ado.

One of the most beautiful qualities in the life of Christ was His quietness. The prophet said of Him before He came into the world, "He will not cry, nor lift up His voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street." When earthly kings move through the land they make a great display. Heralds go before them and proclaim their coming. Attention is drawn to them and great public demonstrations mark their movements. The booming of cannon, the ringing of bells, and the shouts of the people tell of their coming and going. When heaven's King went on earth's streets there was no noise. He sought not, but rather shunned, publicity and fame. Throngs did indeed follow Him, but they were drawn by the ministry of love He wrought wherever He went—healing, comforting, forgiving, saving. When the people in their enthusiasm tried to

make Him their king, He fled away to the mountains, seeking refuge there with God. He never advertised Himself. He did nothing for show. Yet think what blessings He left in the world as He passed through it. Wherever His feet touched the earth, flowers grew in the path. Into whatsoever home He entered He carried a breath of heaven and left there the benediction of His peace. Every life He touched had in it afterwards something of beauty or of blessing it never had had before. It is now nineteen centuries since Jesus walked on the earth in human form, and still the influence of His gentle, blessed, quiet life fills all the world.

Which class of men have most deeply impressed the world—those who have made the greatest noise or the quiet people? Of course, in the records of history the names that are most prominent are those of kings and warriors and men of ambition. But there have always been in the world a host of quiet folk who have attracted no attention to themselves, who have done no brilliant deeds, whose names have not got into the newspapers, but who have touched the world's life with the spirit of their own lives. They are the lowly ones who dwell near the heart of Christ, catch the tone of His life, and then go on living

simply and singing the songs of love and peace they have learned.

Yet we all experience the temptation to want others to know us and praise us. Many people think that if they do not get into official positions, or grow rich, or rise to power, or gain newspaper notoriety, or make a show in some way among men, they have failed in living. But some day it will be seen that usually those who have wrought quietly and without fame or human praise have achieved the noblest and most permanent results.

“What shall I do lest life in silence pass ?

And if it do

And never prompt the bray of brass,

What need'st thou rue ?

Remember aye the ocean's deeps are mute—

The shallows roar ;

Worth is the ocean ; fame is the bruit

Along the shore.”

Only the other day one came and spoke with sadness of what appeared to be a useless life. It seemed to have been without result, without blessing to others or honor to Christ, because nothing great or conspicuous had been done. Yet all who know this friend are aware that with her quiet life, her victorious cheerfulness, her unflinching kindness, she carries benedictions wherever she goes.

“Something each day—a word,
 We cannot know its power ;
 It grows in fruitfulness
 As grows the gentle shower.
 What comfort it may bring
 Where all is dark and drear !
 For a kind word every day
 Makes pleasant all the year.

“Something each day—a thought,
 Unselfish, good, and true,
 That aids another’s needs,
 While we our way pursue ;
 That seeks to lighten hearts,
 That leads to pathways clear ;
 For a helpful thought each day
 Makes happy all the year.

“Something each day—a deed
 Of kindness and of good,
 To link in closer bonds
 All human brotherhood.
 Oh, thus the heavenly will
 We all may do while here ;
 For a good deed every day
 Makes blessed all the year.”

Much of the best work in this world is done unconsciously. Indeed, there is danger always that the good deeds we do consciously and with intention shall be marred by the very consciousness with which we do them. There is a legend of a good man’s shadow which, when it fell

behind him where he could not see it, had healing power; but which, when it fell before his face, where he could see it, had no such power. The legend is true in life. There are many quiet people who never dream that they are useful at all, who even deplore their uselessness, but whose days are really full of gentleness and kindness, ever setting in motion gentle tides of beneficent and heavenly influences which make the whole world better, sweetening its air and enriching its life. Some day it will be seen that our very best work in God's sight is done when we are not aware that we are doing any good at all, while much that we glory in as the finest achievements of our lives will prove to have been of no value because filled with self.

The lives of good people are sometimes compared to the dew. One point of likeness is the quiet way in which the dew performs its ministry. It falls silently and imperceptibly. It makes no noise. No one hears it dropping. It chooses its time in the night when men are sleeping, when none can see its beautiful work. It covers the leaves with clusters of pearls. It steals into the bosoms of the flowers and leaves new cupfuls of sweetness there. It pours itself down among the roots of the grasses and tender herbs and plants.

It loses itself altogether, and yet it is not lost. For in the morning there is fresh life everywhere and new beauty. The fields are greener, the gardens are more fragrant, and all nature is clothed in fresh luxuriance.

Is there not in this simile a suggestion as to the way we should seek to do good in this world? Should we not wish to have our influence felt while no one thinks of us rather than that we should be seen and heard and praised? Should we not be willing to lose ourselves in the service of self-forgetful love, as the dew loses itself in the bosom of the rose, caring only that other lives shall be sweeter, happier, and better, and not that honor shall come to us? We are too anxious, some of us, that our names shall be written in large letters on the things we do, even on what we do for our Master, and are not willing to sink ourselves out of sight and let Him only have the praise.

Our Lord's teaching on the subject is very plain. He says: "When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward." That is, they have glory of men—all they seek. "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand

know what thy right hand doeth : that thine alms may be in secret."

The meaning would seem to be that we are not to wish people to know of our good deeds, our charities, our self-denials; that we should not seek publicity, newspaper announcements, for example, when we give money or do good works; indeed, that we are not even to tell ourselves what we have done; that we are not to think about our own good deeds so as to become conscious of them; not to put them down in our diaries and go about complimenting ourselves, throwing bouquets at ourselves, and whispering: "How good I am! What fine things I have done!"

This is a close test of our lives. Are we willing to be as the dew—to steal abroad in the darkness, carrying blessings to men's doors, blessings that shall enrich the lives of others and do them good, and then steal away again before those we have helped or blessed waken to know what hand it was that brought the gift? Are we willing to work for others without gratitude, without recognition, without human praise, without requital? Are we content to have our lives poured out like the dew to bless the world and make it more fruitful, and yet remain hidden away ourselves? Is it enough for us to see the

fruits of our toil and sacrifice in others' brightened homes, greater prosperity and deeper happiness ; or in good institutions, in renewed society, in benefits prepared by us and enjoyed by others, yet never hear our names spoken in praise or honor—perhaps even hearing others praised for things we have done ?

Yet, is it not thus that our lesson teaches us we are to live if we are followers of Christ? John the Baptist, when they asked him who he was, said he was only a voice—a voice crying in the wilderness, foretelling the Messiah. That was humility—hiding away that only Christ should be seen and honored. Florence Nightingale, having gone as an angel of mercy among the hospitals of the Crimea until her name was enshrined in every soldier's heart, asked to be excused from having her picture taken, when thousands of the men begged for it, that she might drop out and be forgotten, and that Christ alone might be remembered as the author of the blessings her hands had ministered. That was the true Christian spirit.

We need not trouble ourselves about fame, trying to make sure of honor and praise when we have done anything for the Master. What is fame? At the best, it is likely to be transient.

We all know how soon the world forgets even its brightest names. A man who has filled a large place among his fellows dies to-day. To-morrow all the newspapers will give him a notice, longer or shorter. Two or three days later his funeral occurs and then his name disappears from the public prints unless he has so disposed of his property that the announcement shall start another ripple of publicity. Recently an honored railroad president died, and the day he was buried every wheel on the great railway system he had directed stopped and stood still for ten minutes. Then the trains rolled on as before, and the great man will scarcely be missed or mentioned hereafter.

What an empty thing is fame! How unsatisfactory! How hard it is to maintain! How fickle it is! There is a picture of the place of the crucifixion of Jesus, with the empty cross, and the crowd gone, and over yonder an ass nibbling at a piece of withered palm branch. That is the way of fame too often. Palm Sunday and Good Friday were only five days apart. Says Emily Dickinson :—

Fame is a bee.
It has a song—
It has a sting—
Ah, too, it has a wing.

As one writes: "When death has dropped the curtain, we shall hear no more applause. And though we fondly dream that it will continue after we have left the stage, we do not realize how quickly it will die away in silence while the audience turns to look at the new actor and the next scene. Our position in society will be filled as soon as it is vacated, and our name remembered only for a moment—except, please God, by a few who have learned to love us, not because of fame, but because we have helped them and done them some good."

The closing words of this quotation tell us the secret of the only fame that is worth living for—the fame of love, won not by our great deeds, but by service in Christ's name. The only fame that will last will be in the records of good done to others. Vain was the child's wish that he might help God paint the clouds and sunsets, for as we watch the glorious banks of clouds in the heavens, their form changes and their glory vanishes. But if you go about doing good in simple ways, in gentle kindnesses, not thinking of reward, not dreaming of praise, not hoping for any return, you are enshrining your name where it will have immortal honor.

Long, long centuries ago a little fern leaf grew

in a valley. Its veins were delicate and its fibers tender. It was very lovely in its green tracery. But by and by it fell and perished in the indistinguishable mass of vegetation that lay in the valley. It seemed, indeed, lost, for who could ever find a fern leaf again amid such heaps of decay? It had made no history and left no trace, no impression in the world, had done nothing to tell of its brief stay on the earth.

But the other day a thoughtful man of science, searching out nature's secrets, came with pick and hammer and broke off a piece of rock—and there his eyes traced on the stone—

“Fairy pencilings, a quaint design,
Leafage, veining, fibers, clear and fine;
And the fern's life lay in every line.
So, I think, God hides some souls away,
Sweetly to surprise us at the last day.”

So God hides away the things of love we do in the silence, with no thought of reward—hides them away in the memories, in the hearts, and in the lives of those we help, or bless, or influence for good. Nothing done in love and in humility will be lost. Fame is transient and ephemeral, like the flowers you wear to-day, which will fade by to-morrow; but the touches you put upon human lives are immortal.

Those who have learned to live "in quietness and in confidence" have found the true secret of beautiful living. Confidence! God loves to be trusted. We all love to be trusted. Earth has no sweeter joy than when one heart trusts another. God is like us in this—trusting Him gives Him joy. He has a plan for our lives, a plan that takes in all our days and their smallest events. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" means not that God actually counts our hairs—there would be no use in that—but that the smallest things are included in God's thought for our lives. One came to me in anxiety about the future. This friend has had a good position for several years, but the office would be closed August thirty-first—in one month—and the work would cease. "Then what shall I do?" asked the person. The answer I gave was: "God has a plan for your life far beyond August thirty-first. His plan takes in all the months after that as long as you may live. He will have something ready for you when your present task is finished." God loves to have us trust Him implicitly. The simpler our faith is, the more joy it gives Him. And He will never disappoint our confidence.

We do not know how much we grieve God by

our noisy fretfulness, our peevish complainings, our miserable discontents, our sad unbeliefs. Oh, for quietness and confidence! The promise runs: "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Strength—that is just what we need, for we are pitifully weak. If only we would get quiet and still, God's strength would come into our lives. If only we had confidence—that would bring us into communion with Christ, and leaning on Him, His strength would become ours and His peace would hold us quiet and at rest.

"Oh, the little birds sang east,
And the little birds sang west,
And I smiled to think God's greatness
Flowed round our incompleteness—
Round our restlessness—His rest."

When sailors are heaving the anchor, they start a song and keep time to the music. When soldiers are going into battle, the bands play martial airs to inspire the men. Carlyle said, "Give us, oh, give us the man who sings at his work." There is tremendous power in a songful heart. Quietness and confidence will fill our hearts with music, and then we will be strong.



VI

THE NAME ON THE FOREHEAD

“ His servants shall serve Him : and they shall see His face ;
and His name shall be on their foreheads.”—REVELATION
xxii. 3, 4.

“ Jesus taught
Life beyond this life, timeless, infinite ;
As little parted from the world we see
As daytime is from dream-time, when we drowse,
And think 'tis night with sunlight on our lids.”

— *The Light of the World.*

VI

THE NAME ON THE FOREHEAD

IN his vision of the holy city John saw much that was wonderful. He saw the redeemed in their everyday life and had glimpses of their glory and their happiness. Among other things he tells us, "His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads." It is well that we should look in upon the beauty and blessedness of the heavenly home when we may, that we may know something of the glory that is waiting for us. It is well that we should see a little of the life and the privileges of the saints who are with Christ that we may be stimulated and encouraged in our struggles and our slow attaining. That is what we are going to be by and by. These things will be said of us after a while.

"His servants shall serve Him." That is what they do here too—they serve Him. We are set here to toil. Our hands are full of tasks. Our work is never done. Paul loved to call himself

the servant of Christ. He belonged to Christ altogether. Once he gathered all the creeds of his life into one great phrase—"Whose I am, and whom I serve." The Master's disciples are called and sent out to do their Lord's work in this world. All our work, even what we call secular work, belongs to our serving of Christ. "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." The tasks that fill our hands through the long days, all are done for Christ, if we are really living for Him. We are always serving Him, not only when we are engaged in some spiritual service, but also when we are attending to our business affairs. We all have some little part to do also in advancing our Master's kingdom. We are to help to carry the gospel to every creature. Ease is not to be thought of while we stay here.

But some people suppose that this life of service is only for the earth, and that it will be no longer required when we pass into the other life. Heaven is thought of by many as a place of absolute rest, where the inhabitants will have nothing more to do forever. Indeed, in one of the beatitudes of the book of The Revelation we are told of the blessed dead that when they die in the Lord they rest from their labors. But the

word "labors" here does not mean things we do in love for our Master. It has in it the idea of painful toils, cares, anxieties, sufferings. Much of earth's work is hard, sometimes bitter. It is often unrequited or poorly requited. It is burdensome and oppressive. Many good people suffer injustice at the hands of others. There are those also who are compelled to work in pain and ill health all their days. Then many spend their lives in toil and have nothing to show for it at the end, nothing gathered for times of adversity and need. A great deal of the world's work is full of labor and sorrow.

What the words mean is that the servants of Christ shall rest from all that is hard, burdensome, and painful in earth's experience. Nothing of fret or pain or anguish can enter heaven. Whatever is burdensome or oppressive in labor will be left behind, but work will be a feature of the heavenly life. We are not going into a world of idleness when we leave this world. Indeed, heaven would not be a heaven to us if we could never do anything there. For even in this world the sweetest, deepest, purest joy of life is that which we find in doing good, in serving others. This was Christ's own sweetest joy. He came to earth to serve. He loved, and love's deepest joy

always comes in helping, blessing, comforting others. He bequeathed His joy to us, and so we find our holiest joy, as He found His, in serving. If we have not learned this secret, we have one of life's sweetest lessons yet to learn in beginning to serve.

There is a beautiful legend which tells that one shepherd was kept at home watching a fevered guest the night the angels came to Bethlehem with the announcement of the birth of Jesus. The other shepherds saw the heavenly host, heard their song, and beheld the glory. Returning home, their hearts were wonderfully elated. But all the night Shemuel sat alone by the restless sufferer and waited. His fellow-shepherds pitied him because he had missed the vision and the glory which they had seen. But in his patient serving he had found blessing and reward of his own. He had missed, indeed, the splendor of that night in the fields, and in his serving he gave up his own life, for the fever-poison touched him and he died. But he had tasted the joy of sacrifice, and then his eyes saw a more wondrous glory when he entered the Divine presence.

“Shemuel, by the fever-bed,
Touched by beckoning hands that led,
Died and saw the Uncreated ;
All his fellows lived and waited.”

So it always is in life in this world. Those who sit by fever-beds, denying themselves the ease and indulgence which others seek, while they minister to human need, seem to miss much that is very beautiful. Their gentle ministry keeps them away from places of privilege, even from scenes of spiritual ecstasy. Their duty is to nurse the sick. Or they are mothers, caring for little children. While at their common tasks, they see not the angel hosts nor hear their songs. They are kept away from scenes of earthly gladness and joy. Their mission is to serve. But meanwhile they have their own reward—the sweet, sacred joy which comes into the hearts of those who love and serve in Christ's name.

“His servants shall serve Him.” That is, in the other life. They have served Him here, and they will continue to serve Him in heaven. What their work there will be we do not know. We are told that the saints in glory will be as the angels. Angels serve. They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation in this world. In the Scriptures we have many glimpses of angels at their work—cheering, helping, delivering, guiding God's children—always serving. If we are to be as the angels, we shall serve. Angels are sent everywhere to carry

messages of comfort, cheer, and help. Why may we not be sent to this or other worlds on ministries of love?

We are told that in heaven we shall be like Christ, and He served. His life was an unbroken service of love. Of all the portraits of the Master in the New Testament, none is more characteristic than that one which shows Him girt with the towel and with the basin in His hand, washing His disciples' feet. "I am among you as He that serveth," He said. He went about His tasks doing good. His days were all filled with kindness. We have accounts of a few great miracles wrought by Him, but all His hours and moments were filled with little words and deeds of love. He was always serving. For every one He met His heart yearned; to every pain and sorrow His compassion went out; and to every human need His hand was reached forth to help. He said He came to do the work of His Father, and that was love's work. He passed into heaven at the time of His ascension, but He did not cease to show kindness. Luke, referring to Christ's stay on earth, says that in that time He "began both to do and to teach." He only began His ministry of love. We do not see Him now going on our streets helping, comforting, cheering, but He has

never ceased His activity in this world. He continues to serve.

“So still, dear Lord, in every place
Thou standest by the toiling folk,
With love and pity in Thy face,
And givest of Thy help and grace
To those who meekly bear the yoke.”

If we are to be like Christ in heaven, surely we shall serve too as He does. We have one instance in the Scriptures of saints from heaven coming back to earth to serve. Jesus was setting out on His journey to the cross. The burden on Him was very heavy. His heart was tender and the road before Him was indeed a sorrowful way. He did not shrink, but He needed comfort. So one night two glorious beings were sent from their abode in heaven to talk with Him and to encourage Him. These were Moses and Elijah. They had been centuries at home with God. Now they came back to earth to strengthen the Son of man in His hour of need.

May not this one recorded instance of such serving mean to us that others who have passed into heaven also shall be sent back to earth on errands of love to those who need them in their struggles and sorrows? We do not know—we cannot tell, but if such service was rendered once,

may it not be done again? May not others of Christ's servants be sent to this world to bring help, cheer, encouragement to those who are weary or troubled or faint? Of this, at least, we are sure—that in heaven "His servants shall serve Him." Death does not interrupt life, nor does it end life's work. We shall have more love in our hearts in heaven than we ever have here, and love always serves. Love would die if it had no opportunity to help, to render aid, to do good. All our training in this world is toward usefulness. We are taught that we are to do good to all men, to bear one another's burdens, to be sons of consolation, to help the weak, to guard and keep other lives. Surely all this training is not for earth only. In some way in heaven we will continue serving Christ by serving others. Indeed, at the best, our life here is but a school of practice in which we are trained for the real work which it will be ours to do in the immortal years. "His servants shall serve Him."

"And they shall see His face." In this world we do not see our Lord's face. He is with us, but we do not see Him. We endure as seeing Him who is invisible, but no one ever saw God in this world. The Bible tells us, however, that we shall have the "beatific vision" in heaven. We

have this in Job: "After my skin, even this body, is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God." In one of the Psalms we read:—

"As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness ;
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding Thy form."

One of our Lord's Beatitudes reads: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." John says that in heaven we shall be like Christ, for we shall see Him as He is. One day we shall slip away from these scenes of earth. Our eyes shall be closed on all familiar things. Next moment—O rapture! they will be opened on the unveiled face of Jesus Christ. That is what death will be to you if you are God's child. You may dread it, but it is only going to look at your Redeemer's face.

"From the dust of the weary highway,
From the smart of sorrow's rod,
Into the royal presence,
They are bidden as guests of God.
The veil from their eyes is taken,
Sweet mysteries they are shown ;
Their doubt and fears are over,
For they know as they are known."

The bliss of heaven will be largely in being with Christ, in seeing His face, in enjoying His companionship, His friendship.

The words, "they shall see His face," suggest that this will be the inspiration of the heavenly service. We know what a benediction the face of a loved and honored human friend is to us as we go out on any hard task or dangerous duty. There are men whose "God bless you" makes us braver and stronger for days. One said, speaking of a dear and noble friend, "To meet him in the morning and have his smile brightens all the hours of the day for me." What will it be in heaven to look into Christ's face of love in the morning and to have His smile!

To see the face of Christ is also a token of high honor. Not many people are admitted to the presence of a king. Only his favorites and those high in rank have this privilege. But in heaven all Christ's servants shall see His face. That is, they shall be admitted to the closest fellowship and shall have all the privileges of intimate friends.

What a blessed moment it will be when we are ushered into the presence of Christ! No wonder Saint Paul says, "To depart and be with Christ . . . is very far better." This is a beautiful world—it is part of our Father's house. It is wondrously adorned. It is sweet to live here, with human love to surround us with its gentleness. But it will be very far better to be with

Christ, serving close by His side, looking into His face as we come and go. Miss Willard's last words were, "How beautiful to be with God!" and one writes:—

“ Then let it fade, this dream of earth,
 When I have done my life-work here,
 Or long, or short, as seemeth best—
 What matters, so God's will appear?

“ I will not fear to launch my bark
 Upon the darkly rolling flood,
 'Tis but to pierce the mist—and then,
 How beautiful to be with God!”

“ His name shall be on their foreheads.”¹

¹ Recently I received a letter from Henry G. Weston, D.D., LL. D., President of the Crozer Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Weston is eminent as one of the most honored expositors of the Bible in this country. Well past eighty years of age, he is still active in all good work for his Master. He is a man greatly beloved. His friendship for me, shown in many ways along the years, has been an inspiration and a help beyond measure. In the letter referred to, Dr. Weston writes:—

“ My thoughts have clustered at odd times about Revelation xxii. 3, 4. ‘ His servants shall . . . see His face ; and His name shall be on their foreheads.’ The reflection will be visible to all who look upon them, but will be unseen by themselves. That they are Christ's is evident to all, but of this they themselves are unconscious.”

This sermon has been prepared, therefore, at Dr. Weston's request. The thought which he specially notes regarding the name on the forehead is very beautiful.

Name in the Bible stands for character. A man's name gathers into itself all that the man is. When you hear the name of any one mentioned, any one you know, or any one of whom you have heard much, the man's whole personality rises before your mind. So the name of God includes all that is revealed of God's character. To us it means all that God is to us. When it is said here that "His name shall be on their foreheads," the thought is that the Divine likeness is imprinted there.

There is evidently a close connection, too, between what is said in the second clause of the verse and the third. "His servants . . . shall see His face; and" therefore "His name shall be on their foreheads." While His servants look upon the brightness of their Master's face its beauty is imprinted upon them. That is what the beloved disciple says in one of his epistles, "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is." Looking upon Christ makes us like Him.

Saint Paul teaches the same truth in a remarkable passage in one of his epistles. "We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." This transformation is not a

heavenly matter altogether—it will be completed there, when, all veils removed, we shall look directly into the face of Christ; but it is something for our earthly life too. It begins here, and it goes on, the likeness coming out ever more and more fully and clearly as we know more and more about Christ. Companionship with Him, communion with Him, looking into His face, prints upon us His likeness. Every day, if we live as we should, some new line of His beauty comes out on our faces.

But we must notice *where* the name of God is printed—"on their foreheads." The suggestion of Dr. Weston is very beautiful—the name is where others can see it, but where it is not seen by the person himself. You cannot see your own forehead, and you are not aware of the nobleness or the brightness that others see there. This unconsciousness of the radiance on the face is part of the splendor; being aware of it would dim the brightness. We know that when any one is conscious of the beauty or the refinement stamped on his face, a great part of the beauty or the refinement is gone. So self-consciousness mars spiritual loveliness. When a man knows that he is humble, he is no longer humble. The man who is truly poor in spirit is not himself

aware of the shining of his life, the splendor of his deeds, the power of his words, or of his ministries. The best people are always the least conscious of their goodness and worth. Others see the shining, but they do not.

There is a beautiful legend¹ which tells of a saintly man who was greatly beloved of the angels, who had seen much of his godly life on the earth. The angels asked God to give their favorite some new power, some fresh mark of the Divine favor, some new gift or ability, which would make him still more useful. They were told to see the man and ask him what special power he would like to have bestowed upon him. The angels visited him and asked him what gift he would choose. He said he was content and wanted nothing more. They pressed him to name something which God might do for him or give to him. Would he not like power to work miracles? He said No—that was Christ's work. Would he not like power to lead many souls to Christ? He answered No—it was the Holy Spirit's work to lead men to the Saviour.

The angels in their eagerness still begged him to name something which they might ask God to grant to him. At last he answered that if he

¹ Used in the author's "The Master's Blesseds," chapter i.

must choose any new power he would like the ability to do a great deal of good among men without even knowing it. So it was granted that from that day his shadow, when it fell behind him where he could not see it, had wondrous healing power, but when it fell before his face where he could see it, it had no such power.

The legend teaches its own lesson. When a Christian is aware of the beauty of the Lord upon him, the beauty is dimmed. We are prepared for the largest usefulness when we are unconscious of our preparation. "His name shall be on their foreheads." Others will see it shining there. This will be true in the heavenly life. "We shall be like Him." All the redeemed and all the angels will see the glory of the Lord on the face of each saint.

The same is true also of every sincere believer in this world. He bears the image of his Lord upon his life. This is not some mystic mark that no one can understand—it is the beauty of holiness. When we study the gospels and see Christ Himself, we learn what that name is which shines on the forehead of His friends. It is nothing mysterious or occult—it is patience, gentleness, thoughtfulness, humility, kindness, the spirit of forgiveness, meekness, peace, joy,

goodness. People have no difficulty in discovering the marks of Jesus on those who wear them. But the holy ones themselves do not know that this blessed name is burning with such brightness on their brows. They are surprised when others speak of the beauty of the Lord upon them.

We remember it was said of Moses, when he came down from the mount from speaking with God, that his face was shining—the Divine glory lingered there. His face was so bright that the people were afraid to come near him, and he had to put a veil over it while he talked with them. But it is said also that Moses knew not that his face shone.

We get a lesson in humility. Let us not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Let us not think of our goodness, our devoutness, our worthy deeds, our helpful services at all. Especially, let us never talk of our virtues, our piety, of what we have done. We should seek to be full of the Spirit of God, but the Spirit does not mean to glorify us—He would honor Christ. We are to pray, “Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us”; but we should seek to have it shining where we may not see it, where it may honor God Himself. We are too apt to be conscious of our power and to assert ourselves before men in ways that hinder

our usefulness and lessen our influence. "Let your light shine before men," said the Master, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father"—not you.

How shall we reach the blessedness of which these words from the Apocalypse give us a glimpse? These servants of God, serving Him, beholding His face, wearing His glory on their foreheads, seem far beyond us. They have climbed up the mountain to its summit while we are still toiling away among the lowest foothills. How can we ever attain the lofty height where they appear? There is only one way—Christ. This blessedness must begin here or we never shall reach it there. Heaven must come down to us, into our hearts, or we never can enter heaven. These noble features of the heavenly home are for the Christian life of earth as well as the perfected life of glory. We must begin now to realize them. We must be Christ's here—doing His will, going where He bids us go, busy in ministries of love in His name. We must see His face, dwell in His presence, enjoy His friendship here. We must bear His name on our foreheads, these common days, where the world may see it. We must be Christ's now or we cannot enter Christ's home and glory hereafter.

— VII

THE TRUE GLORY OF LIFE

“ David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate ! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David : but he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto Jehovah. And he said, Be it far from me, O Jehovah, that I should do this : shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives ? therefore he would not drink it.”—II. SAMUEL xxiii. 15-17.

“ Measure thy life by loss instead of gain ;
Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth ;
For love’s strength standeth in love’s sacrifice ;
And whoso suffers most has most to give.”

—*Ugo Bassi’s Sermon.*

VII

THE TRUE GLORY OF LIFE

THE story of David longing for water from the well by the gate is very beautiful. There are several interesting and profitable suggestions in it. One is the influence of childhood memories and associations over the life in the days of strength and maturity. David and his men were in the cave of Adullam. Over yonder was Bethlehem, the home of David's boyhood. He knew every spot. He had played over the fields. He had led his sheep into every nook, along every path. Probably it was not so much thirst for water as homesickness that forced from him that day the cry, "Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well . . . which is by the gate!"

It is easy to understand David's longing. The memories of our childhood home tug at our hearts through all our years. There is great keeping power in such love for the old home. While the picture of the familiar rooms, the faces at the fireside, at the table, and at the family

worship, and the recollections of the lessons, the songs, the talks—while these abide, with their sacred suggestions and associations, it is not easy to drift far away into wrong. The heart that cherishes no such memories, recalls no such a past, in which there is no hallowed shrine of recollection, has lost much.

Another suggestion in this story is the love of these three men for their chief. The moment they heard his wish for a drink of water from the old well they determined to get it for him. The well was in the hands of the enemy, and it was impossible to bring the water without peril and cost. Yet so strong was their love for David that they went through armed ranks and brought it. This reminds us of what Christ did to bring to His friends the water of life from the old well of salvation. One of the noblest of the old litanies tells the story well:—"By the cold crib in which Thou didst lie, have mercy upon us. By Thy flight into Egypt and all the pains Thou didst suffer there; by Thy thirst, hunger, cold, and heat, in this vale of Thy misery; by the inward and great heaviness which Thou hadst when praying in the garden, and by the spitting on Thee and the scourging; by Thy purple garments and Thy crown of thorns; by the nailing

of Thy right hand to the cross, and the shedding of Thy most precious blood; by the nailing of Thy left hand, and that most holy wound—purge, enlighten, and reconcile us to God. By the lifting up of Thy most holy body on the cross; by the bitterness of Thy death and its intolerable pains; by Thy glorious resurrection; by Thy glorious and wondrous ascension—have mercy upon us!”

Everything about our redemption reminds us of what it cost our Saviour to bring it to us. He stopped at no sacrifice, because He loved us to the uttermost.

Then there is a suggestion here of what other friends besides Christ do for those they love. Next to the love of Christ, the most precious thing in all the world is human love. And how often does it repeat the story of devotion, and at cost and danger bring cups of water from far-off springs for those who are thirsty! We do not begin to know what we owe to our friends who are always doing things for us.

Then there is a suggestion of our duty to those about us who have their longings, their needs, their hungers, their discouragements, their sorrows. The cry of thirsty hearts falls continually upon our ears. “Oh that one would give me

water to drink of the well of Bethlehem!" There are many unhappy people, unsatisfied people, in this world—there are those who are in sorrow, those who hunger for love. We may not hear their cries, for they cry in silence. But we are needed continually to run to the well of Bethlehem to bring cups of water for those about us who are thirsty.

There is a society in one of our great cities, formed to help the poor, whose aim is said to be to give to every family a friend—some one who will take an interest in the household, visit the home, and bring into it human sympathy, love, cheer, and gentle kindness. We never can know what it means to some families to give them a friend—true, wise, strong, and helpful. No other way of helping people anywhere, rich or poor, refined or rude, good or bad, is half so Divine as by being a friend to them. One of the fine things we learn from the story of Saint Paul is the duty and privilege of being a friend to men. His heart craved friends, but he also longed to be a friend to every one. He helped people by becoming their friend. We are taught continually that we ought to love Christ—and the lesson cannot be taught too often or too earnestly, nor the blessing of loving Christ extolled too highly; but if we

would do any real good we must love people too in this world. That is the way Christ helps men—by loving them. Then if we really love Christ, we cannot but love others—the one love always begets the other.

An ancient writer said of another: "He was a friend to man, and he lived in a house by the side of a road." He lived by the roadside because he wanted to be near people, that he might be their friend and help them. There are some who do not care to bother with others. They like to be very conventional neighbors. They do not want to be troubled in helping people. But they do not know what opportunities of doing good they are missing—what opportunities also of joy for themselves. The deepest happiness in this world is found in being a friend to others. It was the joy of helping men, of saving them, of serving them, of being their friend, of bringing them cups of water from the well of heaven, that filled the heart of Christ and enabled Him to endure the cross and despise the shame.

A church visitor went every month to take some money to a poor woman who lived alone and was not able to leave her little house. The old woman received the visitor very kindly, and as she was going away, said, "I thank you very

much for the money—it will pay my rent; but I thank you far more for your visit. What I want most is not money, but folks.” Her heart was hungry for human sympathy. If you get near enough to people, you will hear every day longings and yearnings like this of David, “Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!”

No other well in all the world has in it such water as has the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate. This water is the love of Christ, the grace of God, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst any more. When you run to this well of Bethlehem you will find no armed guards to keep you away. Sometimes in the country you will come to a wayside spring with a little cup hanging by it. The cup means that the water is free and that whosoever is thirsty may drink. You may drink freely yourself from the well of Bethlehem. But the water is not for you only. There is another near you who is thirsty too, waiting for you to give the cup to him in the Master’s name.

“That plenty but reproaches me
Which leaves my brother bare;
Not wholly glad my heart can be
While his is bowed with care.”

We have another suggestion in the way David received the water which his friends brought to him. He said their heroic love and achievement for him made the water sacred, hallowed it. He dared not use it for the mere gratifying of his own personal thirst. It could be fitly honored only by giving it to God. So he poured it out as an offering, an oblation, to God. David's act has its suggestions for us.

One is that the best part of a noble deed is its motive. The finest thing in kindness is not the act, which may be very simple, but the thoughtful love which inspires the kindness. An old writer said, "You can paint fire, but you cannot paint heat." It is not the mere flame as a picture that warms you, but the warmth, which you cannot see, which makes no picture. The act of the three brave men was heroic. It would have been heroic if done as an adventure or to receive praise or reward of men. But the noble quality in the deed was not merely what people saw—the dash through the enemy's lines, the dipping up of the water in the face of the guards, and the return again with it to the cave. The really noble thing in the act was the love for David which inspired it.

Always, in all life, it is true that it is the motive

which gives value to our acts. One man builds a hospital or a home for orphans. He does it because he wants to be known as generous and philanthropic. The motive which God sees is self-love, the desire to get honor from men. The deed itself seems very large to human eyes. It is a noble charity. It will be praised by men. The newspapers will make a great deal of it, and the man who built it will be honored by his fellows. But large as the great institution bulks in the world, all that appears in God's eyes is a little picture of a man trying to glorify himself, to get his name honored. There will be a good deal of shrinking and shriveling when some day we get to see all things as they are. Some large things—large in earthly seeming—will be pitifully small then.

But there is another side to this. A lowly man does a little thing—a little act in itself. It is only a simple kindness—a cup of cold water given to one who is thirsty. But the motive is love, and that makes it shine in bright radiance, like a transfiguration, in heaven's sight. Great gifts were dropped into the treasury that day when the Master was watching how men gave. But the only gift He praised was the widow's offering of a

farthing. He said it was greater than any of the others. The motive made the difference.

The same is true in all life. We should not do good to get men's praise. If we work from this motive, we shall have just what we work for, but nothing else. Men will praise us, but God will not. All there really is of any work, even the greatest, is the part that lies hidden in the worker's heart. Many men's lives, therefore, are very much smaller in heaven's sight than they appear to their fellows to be. Then there are many whose lives are a thousand times more beautiful, more radiant and noble as God sees them, than they are as the world sees them. Love in them glorifies them.

This truth has wide application. It is not the part which men see that is most important in any one's life. Love glorified the deed of bravery wrought by David's three friends and made it holy as a sacrament. It is love that glorifies whatever is pleasing to God in our lives. One person sings a hymn and it is only a common song breathed into the air. Another standing close by sings it and it is holy worship, and carries up to God a heart's incense of praise. One performs an act of kindness from a selfish motive, and while it may give comfort to one or

to many it is only a common deed. Another performs an act just like it, but with love as its inspiration, and it is a sacrifice to God, acceptable and pleasing to Him. The difference is in the hearts of those who perform the deeds. We would better do even the smallest things in love and thus lift them up into radiant beauty than do large and conspicuous things to glorify ourselves.

There is an eastern story of a king who built a great temple at his own cost, no other one being allowed to do even the smallest part of the work. The king's name was put upon the temple as the builder of it. But, strange to say, when the dedication day came it was seen that a poor widow's name was there in place of the king's. The king was angry and gave command that the woman bearing the name on the scroll should be found. They discovered her at last among the very poor and brought her before the king. He demanded of her what she had done toward the building of the temple. She said, "Nothing." When pressed to remember anything she had done, she said that one day when she saw the oxen drawing the great stones past her cottage, exhausted in the heat and very weary, she had in pity given them some wisps of hay. And this simple kindness to dumb animals, prompted by a heart's compassion,

weighed more in God's sight than all the king's vast outlay of money. What we truly do for Christ and in love is glorious in His sight.

There is another suggestion in David's way of receiving the water. He would not even taste it himself. He gave it to God. That which made the water so sacred in David's sight was its cost and the love that prompted the heroic act. We get the lesson, that whatever comes to us through the pain and peril of others, or through blood and sacrifice, is thereby made sacred, and should not be used in any self-indulgence, but should be given to God.

The story of national life illustrates this principle. Progress is costly. Whatever is great and noble and worthy is the fruit of sacrifice. It is the story of David's cup of water over again—it is the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives, or who gave their lives. Our great Christian nations are what they are to-day because of long records of sacrifice.

There is a picture which tells the story of a troop of soldiers in northern India. They marched forth bravely in the faultless attire of a holiday. Their guns were polished, their gloves were spotless in their whiteness. A fortnight passed and there had come no word from these

brave men. One morning the sentinel on the wall saw a solitary horseman on the horizon. Slowly he moved along the road. The garrison went out to meet him, supposing it must be a messenger from the absent army. Evidently some misfortune had befallen this soldier. His horse was so weary that its head drooped almost to the ground. The messenger himself, it was seen, had been hurt. A crimson cloth was bound round his forehead. His hair was matted with blood. His hands were wounded. He was faint, almost unconscious. As the men of the garrison drew near, the officer in the lead shouted: "The army! What news of the army?" The soldier, rousing himself from his half stupor, and lifting his bleeding hand to put back his matted locks, replied: "The army! Why, I am the army!" He was the only man left to come back of all that gay company that had gone forth.

This has been the story of many a patriotic army. Thousands went forth and only a little handful returned. We should not forget the cost of the blessings, the liberties, the institutions, the prosperities which mean so much in our best modern life. What did David do with the water whose cost made it holy? He gave it to God. An element of all worthy patriotism is loyalty to

God. Good citizenship is part of all full-rounded religion. It is not enough for Christian men to be honest and true and incorruptible—they must be positive forces for good in the community in which they live. We should be strong for God and for truth and right.

“Be strong !

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift ;
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle ; face it. 'Tis God's fight.

“Be strong !

Say not the days are evil—'Who's to blame?'—
And fold the hands and acquiesce. O shame !
Stand up, speak out and bravely, in God's name.

“Be strong !

It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long ;
Faint not, fight on ! To-morrow comes the song.”

If the cost of our national blessings makes them so sacred, what shall we say of the blessings of Christianity? They come to us without price ; but there was One who paid an infinite price to procure them for us. Dare we spend on ourselves these precious gifts of redeemed life? We will deal with them worthily only when we give them all to God.

“I will away and find my God,
And what I dare not keep ask Him to take,
And taking, love's sweet sacrifice to make ;
Then, like a wave, the sorrow and the pain
High heaven with glory flood—
For them, for all, a splendid gain.”

This oldtime story suggests to us also what are the really great things in life, the things that endure. Noble deeds are great. It has been a long time since those three friends of David's went forth on their brave errand. But the world has been blessed all these thirty centuries by the story of their heroism. The telling of the story again to-day has started noble impulses in our breasts, and we will be better to-morrow for learning anew the devotion of these heroic men.

Another of the great things of life is service, service prompted by love. Life is made worth while only by love. The heroism in David's men was splendid, but it was their love for their chief that gave the true glory to their deed. The things we do for love are the things that will live. “Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love.” All that love does is immortal.

Another great thing is worship ; that is, the consecration of life's avails and fruits to God. We

are not living truly till we recognize our supreme obligation to God. To leave God out of our life is to leave out blessing, joy, hope, and heaven. No life has found its true place in the universe till it has given itself to God. Then day by day, whatever new gift, power, or possession comes to us, we should promptly lay it on God's altar. We become great only when we link our little lives to the great infinite Life.

The life that is given up to God in true devotion need fear nothing. We may have our sorrows, our disappointments, our losses, but if all our life is in the hands of God, no harm can come to us. In all the events and experiences of our strangest days it is life, character, that God is making in us. Very beautiful is the figure of the loom. God is the weaver. He has before Him the pattern into which He would fashion our lives. Some threads are white, some are dark, but the great Weaver will blend them so that the finished work will be beautiful.

“Children of yesterday,
Heirs of to-morrow,
What are you weaving?
Labor or sorrow?
Look at your looms again ;

Faster and faster
Fly the great shuttles
Prepared by the Master.
Life's is the loom ;
Room for it—room.

“ Children of yesterday,
Heirs of to-morrow,
Lighten the labor
And sweeten the sorrow ;
Now, while the shuttles fly
Faster and faster,
Up and be at it—
At work with the Master ;
He stands at your loom—
Room for Him—room.

“ Children of yesterday,
Heirs of to-morrow,
Look at your fabric
Of labor and sorrow,
Seamy and dark
With despair and disaster ;
Turn it—and lo,
The design of the Master !
The Lord's at the loom ;
Room for Him—room.”

VIII

GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.”—EPHESIANS iv. 30.

“Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness, pitying, see :
Oh, make our hearts Thy dwelling place,
And worthier Thee.”

VIII

GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

WE are exhorted not to grieve the Divine Spirit. So the Spirit is a person, not a mere influence. You cannot grieve an influence. You may resist it, but it will not care, will not feel hurt. You can grieve a person, however, give him pain, and the Holy Spirit is a person with feelings, affections, and a heart that can be pained, like your mother's.

The Holy Spirit is also your friend. You cannot grieve a person who dislikes you or is indifferent to you. But when one loves you, cares for you, is deeply interested in you, you grieve him if you do not trust him, if you do not prove faithful and true, if you treat him ungratefully or unkindly, if you slight or despise his love. There are children who grieve their parents. There are persons who grieve their friends. Perhaps there never is love that is not hurt sometimes, many times—we all are so heedless, so ignorant, so thoughtless, such blunderers in living and loving.

Now we may grieve the Holy Spirit of God, for He loves us. We do not think often of the love of the Spirit. We know that the Father loves us, for He gave His only begotten Son to redeem us. We know that the Son of God loves us: His coming to this world in the Incarnation and all His wonderful life of service and sacrifice for us proved His love. But we do not speak much of the love of the Spirit. Yet His love is no less than that of the Father or the Son. Think how He follows us patiently and unweariedly in all our wanderings, through all our unfaithfulness, never giving us up until He gets us home at last. Think how He makes us His companions, entering into closest relations of friendship with us.

We speak of the condescension of the Son of God in coming to earth and living in a human body in a world of sin and sorrow, meeting the conditions of ignorance, enmity, unbelief, rejection, and wrong. Have you ever thought of the condescension of the Holy Spirit in living with us, not three years only, but continually? We are told, too, that He lives in us. "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit." What kind of a place is your heart for the Holy Spirit to live in? Think of all the evil there is in it. Think

of the unholy thoughts, feelings, desires, affections, of the rebellions, the insubmissions, the brood of unclean things there are in your heart. Now into that heart the Holy Spirit comes, not for a transient visit, as when some pure and gentle woman goes into a place of wretchedness and degradation for half an hour on an errand of mercy, but to make His home there, to live there until He has changed all the evil into good. Do you not think that the love of the Holy Spirit in making our hearts His home for all the years of our life is quite as wonderful as was the love of Christ in spending His three and thirty years in this world? The Holy Spirit loves us tenderly, yearningly, infinitely.

Now we may grieve this Holy Spirit whose heart is so gentle and who loves us so. Nathaniel Hawthorne had a little daughter called Una, who often made up stories for her younger brother. One day she was overheard telling him of a boy who was very naughty. "He grew naughtier and naughtier," said the child, "and every day naughtier still, until at last—at last—he struck God!" That was terrible! But there are many, many people who do strike God not once only, but again and again. The Holy Spirit is God. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."

We must remember that this counsel is addressed to Christians, not to the impenitent. Of course, the impenitent grieve the Holy Spirit too, for He comes to them with His beseeching love, and they resist His pleadings and His entreaties. His mission to the impenitent is to urge them to accept Jesus Christ. So long as they refuse to do this, rejecting the Saviour who died for them, they hurt the heart of the Holy Spirit. Mrs. Stowe tells of the knocking at the door and the call to open, and then in wondrously pathetic words asks—

Did she open? Doth she? Will she?
 So, as wondering we behold,
 Grows the picture to a sign,
 Pressed upon your soul and mine;
 For in every breast that liveth
 Is that strange, mysterious door;
 Though forsaken and betangled,
 Ivy-gnarled and weed-bejangled,
 Dusty, rusty, and forgotten—
 There the piercèd hand still knocketh;
 And with ever-patient watching,
 With the sad eyes true and tender,
 With the glory-crownèd hair—
 Still a God is waiting there.

This surely is a startling picture for those who have never yet accepted of Jesus Christ as their

personal Saviour—God kept waiting and patiently knocking outside their door. It would grieve you to have any one treat you so—when you had gone with love in your heart to do some one good, to show a great kindness—to be shut out, to get no response to your knocking. Yet that is the way many people treat the Holy Spirit for years and years.

But the exhortation against grieving the Spirit is for those who have opened the door, admitting the heavenly Guest, and have then grieved Him as a guest, as a friend. The connection of the words is very suggestive. They stand in the midst of exhortations concerning speech and concerning unlovingness. Notice this reading: "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." So we may grieve the Spirit by our words. Jesus laid great stress on speech as an expression of the life. "By thy words," he said, "thou shalt be justified, and by thy words . . . condemned." Saint Paul's teaching here makes it very plain what kind of speech a Christian should make use of. He should not use any corrupt speech, which scholars say means rather worthless speech—like

the idle words which the Master condemned. What a mass of worthless words, good for nothing, empty, vain, inept, doing nobody any good, are spoken every day! These grieve the Spirit of God, for our wonderful gift of speech is given to us that with it we may bless the world.

Saint Paul tells us what kind of words Christians should speak—such speech as is edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear. Good for edifying! That is, every word we speak should be such as will give help, put cheer, hope, or encouragement into others' hearts—put touches of beauty on others' lives. Are the words we speak these days of this kind? Do they give inspiration, encouragement, strength, uplift? Do they impart grace to those who hear us? This does not mean that all our words shall be solemn and grave. Sometimes the best way to minister grace to a friend is to make him laugh. Humor has its place in Christian speech, and without it religion would fail oftentimes in its most helpful ministry. But if our best work always is to make people happy, what is required is that all our speech shall minister grace to those who hear, make them better, truer, stronger, braver, more helpful to others. There are words that hurt tender hearts, and when we hurt a

human heart, we hurt God and grieve the Holy Spirit.

There are other words which tell us further how the lesson applies in our daily common life. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit. . . . Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you."

We do not know what we are doing when we let bitter thoughts stay in our minds, or when we speak unkind words which give pain to those who love us. We are desecrating the temple in us in which the Holy Spirit has His home. We are hurting, grieving God, for we must remember that he who wrongs one of Christ's own, wrongs Christ Himself. Let us cultivate love and all the gentle expressions of love. Let us remember that God is love—the Holy Spirit is love. Therefore only love can please Him.

We may think we have the Spirit in our hearts because we are busy in Christian work, or because we are sound in doctrine, or because we give money to good causes. Let us know also that anything that is unloving in thought, or feeling, or disposition, or act, hurts God, grieves the

Holy Spirit. Let us seek to make our hearts fit temples for the heavenly Guest by putting out all that is not loving, and welcoming love into every nook and corner of our being.

But there are other ways of grieving the Spirit. His work in us is to glorify Christ. He does not glorify Himself, but, keeping Himself out of sight, never calling attention to Himself, He pours the light upon the Redeemer, that we may see Him, that He may become glorious in our sight.

Then the purpose of the Spirit in us is, further, to have the life of Christ reproduced in us. That is, all the Spirit's work in us is intended to further our fashioning into the likeness of Christ. We think sometimes that we are like Christ because we have good manners, are polite, courteous, kind, obliging, or because we are enrolled as Christians in some church. These are proper marks of a believer in Christ, but there are other marks. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." Each one of these words stands for a quality that is Christlike. Think of what love is as Christ interpreted it, lived it out; what peace is; what joy is; what longsuffering is; what meekness is. Think of

the way Christ went through this world, loving, patient, forbearing, enduring. He knew the hurts of love. We think of His cross as the highest expression of His love, the mountain-top of His revealing of God. So, no doubt, it was. But all His life, even in its smallest acts, was likewise a manifestation of God.

We are not called to go to Calvary to die again—there is no need for this; but we are called to die on the cross, nevertheless, to die continually. Loving as Christ loved is a daily dying. Men must see the cross in our conduct, our disposition, our treatment of others, our service, our spirit of self-denying and sacrifice. Whenever we fail in thus honoring Christ we grieve the Holy Spirit. When we act selfishly instead of unselfishly, when we are false instead of true, when we show pride instead of humility, when we think of our own interests before the interests of Christ's kingdom, when in our relations with others we show an unchristlike temper, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

The great need of the Christian Church to-day is not fine buildings in which to worship God, not more members, not greater wealth, not larger institutions—what the Church needs first and most is holy life, more Christlikeness in its mem-

bers. We should seek to live our faiths. We should bring our living up to our professing. We say we are Christians—well, let us be Christians.

“So, he died for his faith. That is fine—
 More than most of us do.
 But, say, can you add to that line
 That he lived for it, too?”

“In his death he bore witness at last
 As a martyr to truth;
 Did his life do the same in the past
 From the days of his youth?”

“It is easy to die. Men have died
 For a wish or a whim—
 From bravado or passion or pride;
 Was it harder for him?”

“But to live—every day to live out
 All the truth that he dreamt,
 While his friends met his conduct with doubt
 And his words with contempt.

“Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
 Never turning aside?
 Then we'll talk of the life that he led—
 Never mind how he died.”

We grieve the Spirit of God when we get absorbed so much in this world that we lose interest in the heavenly life. A Jewish legend

affirms that if an angel spends seven days down on the earth he becomes gross and opaque and loses the power of his wings. It is true of the human followers of Christ, that if they stay out in the world a little while, away from the presence and fellowship of Christ, they will become earthly, losing their spirituality, their heavenly mindedness. They will also lose the power of their wings and be unable to fly Godward.

There are many strong words in the New Testament concerning the life of the Christian—the life he ought to live in this world. We are to be in the world, but not of it, said the Master. We are to be filled unto all the fullness of God. Our citizenship is to be in heaven. We are to walk as children of light. We are to be holy as God is holy. We cannot live the heavenly life here unless we are always in communication with heaven. He who does not abide in Christ cannot bear fruit. “Apart from Me,” said Christ, “ye can do nothing.” Seven days in the world away from Christ would leave us gross and opaque, too. Indeed, one day without prayer and communion with God will dim the luster of our light and rob us of power. The only way to maintain the glory and the vigor of our spiritual life is to be always under the influence of the Spirit of God.

Another of Saint Paul's expressive counsels concerning the Spirit is given in another of his epistles: "Quench not the Spirit." The Spirit is a fire, the fire of God burning in us, on our heart's altar. This holy flame is a Divine lamp, fed from heaven. Quench it not. Do not put it out. Do not let it burn low. Do not resist the Spirit's work in your heart. Let the fire burn, and burn up all that is not good or worthy in you. Let it purify you, cleanse your life, till nothing unholy remains. Let it kindle your whole being until your life shall be indeed a burning and shining light in the world.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." The word "grieve" is the same in the original as is used in the gospels when it is said of Jesus in Gethsemane that His soul was exceeding sorrowful. So we make another Gethsemane in the heart of Jesus, make Him exceeding sorrowful, even in heaven, if we do not do those things that please Him, if we disappoint His longing for our holiness.

How can we live so as not to grieve the Holy Spirit? Think what it is the Spirit seeks to do in us. His mission is to bring us back to God, to undo the work of sin in us, to teach us the will of God and help us to do that will. He

comes into our hearts when they are full of evil, and His work is to cleanse us of the evil and then to fill us with good. He comes to cure us of all bitterness, anger, and resentment, and to fill us with love. He comes to bring heaven down into our hearts and lives.

What now is our part? It is to help by not hindering. It is to yield our hearts and lives to the Spirit, to obey His voice, to accept His guidance. It is to open every part of our being to His influence, not keeping Him out of any room or closet.

It is a wonderful fact that we can have all the power of God come into our lives, if we will, that we may be instruments which God can use. An organ has a capacity for sweet music, but while it is closed there is no voice in its pipes—it is dumb. The organist might sit down at the keyboard and run his fingers over the keys, and there would still be no music, only a clatter. The organ is dead—it is not of any use. It needs the breathing of the air through its pipes before its mechanism can be effective. Only start the motor and have the air blowing through the organ, and then, when its keys are touched, they will respond in sweet harmonies. We are like organs—we have all the powers

necessary for noble living. We are meant to make sweet music in our living. We have reason, conscience, will, affections, intellectual faculties, education. Yet until the breath of God blows upon us we are only organs mute and dead. The best player can bring out no heavenly music. But when God breathes upon us and we receive the Holy Spirit, then music will pour forth from our lives—the music of joy, peace, love, holiness.

One of Frances Ridley Havergal's poems tells of an Æolian harp which a friend had sent her, telling her in a letter of the sweetness of its tones. Without reading the letter through Miss Havergal took the harp in her hands and began to thrum its seven strings, thinking that was the way to use it. But she could bring out no music. She was disappointed. She then looked at her friend's letter again, and learned that the harp must be put into the window, under the sash, if it would give forth its music. She obeyed the instructions, and then the wind began to blow over the wires and the room was instantly filled with sweet strains.

Our lives are like Æolian harps. Skillful fingers on the strings make a kind of music. Human love brings out much that is beautiful.

But it is only when the breath of God blows upon our lives that heavenly music comes from them. Shall we not yield all our being to this blessed Holy Spirit? We must receive Him or He will not come into our hearts. We can keep Him away if we will. Let us not grieve Him by resisting Him. Let us keep no door shut upon Him. Then, let us obey every command and impulse of the Spirit, doing always the things He bids us do. Let us follow all Divine inspirations.

The true problem of Christian life is not merely church-membership, not merely activity in Christian service, not merely good living—it is to bring all the powers of the body, mind, and spirit under the influence and the sway of God.

“Teach me to feel that Thou art always nigh ;
Teach me the struggle of the soul to bear,
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh ;
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

“Teach me to love Thee as thine angels love,
One holy passion filling all my frame ;
The baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,
My heart an altar and Thy love the flame.”

OCT 19 1933

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2006

Preservation Technologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

BX

917

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 579 091 3

